# NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF A PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION PROCESS FOR THE NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAM OF SASKATCHEWAN

## FINAL REPORT

MARCH, 2003

**The Calibre Group of Companies**
CALIBRE STRATEGIC SERVICES (SK) INC.
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- Saskatchewan Health
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- Saskatchewan Learning
- Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association
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## Disclaimer

The following report on the outcomes of the NEPS-PLAR Needs Assessment, particularly information provided on the results of the NEPS student survey and focus group session, do not necessarily represent the views of the NEPS administrators and faculty, or the initiative's sponsors, and Steering Committee members.

This report is not intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the various forms of learning recognition and their historic usage in post-secondary and other institutions, but to examine the potential and impact of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan. Individuals that require further knowledge of terminology and learning recognition strategies are directed to the Saskatchewan Learning RPL Web page, which provides an overview of RPL initiatives, documents and resources in Saskatchewan, with contact information and/or web links at http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/P/rpl/index.html.

## Additional Copies

Electronic copies of this report may be obtained from the following Internet sites:

University of Saskatchewan: http://www.usask.ca/nursing/

Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology:
http://www.siast.sk.ca/siast/admissions/plar.htm

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, Saskatchewan Learning approached the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) to consider undertaking an assessment of the need for a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process in the nursing program. The NEPS is a collaborative academic venture between the College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and the Nursing Division, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) Kelsey and Wascana Campuses.

In response, the College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan and the Nursing Division, SIAST put forth a joint research proposal, which has been funded through JobStart/Future Skills Sector Partnerships Program, Saskatchewan Learning, to investigate the potential use of PLAR as one possible strategy that may facilitate the progression of students through the NEPS.

In post-secondary education, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a systematic process of assessing, recognizing, and awarding credit for learning (knowledge, skills, values, etc.) that meets the course intents of an accredited course or program, but which has been gained outside of formal education through a variety of means, such as work, non-credit courses, industry training, volunteer activities, life experiences, and so on.

Currently, there is not a process in place within the program that would allow NEPS students to receive credit for prior learning obtained through non-formal means. In late 2002, the NEPS engaged The Calibre Group of Companies to undertake an assessment of the need for a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process in the NEPS.

The needs assessment included three stages of research that were guided by project managers from the NEPS and a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from a wide range of stakeholders associated with nursing education and practice in Saskatchewan.

The first stage of research involved a review of literature and personal contacts to identify how PLAR is utilized in other nursing baccalaureate/diploma programs, or related heath-care programs, and its level of success. The second stage of research focused on examining the need for developing a PLAR process in the NEPS. This research involved the development and execution of a student survey to identify the level of demand NEPS students, with previous health-care or other related prior learning, may have for utilizing PLAR in the program once admitted to the NEPS; and, to assess whether these students perceive they have a significant level of relevant prior learning to merit developing a PLAR process. The final stage of research consisted of a focus group session that included student representation from specific occupational groups identified in the student survey (Home Care Special Care Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, Emergency Medical Technicians). The objective of the focus group session was to more fully understand these students' perceived level of prior learning and to gain further insight into the students' opinions regarding the utilization of a PLAR process in the NEPS.

As well, the survey and focus group activities, with their associated methodologies and research instruments, were submitted to and approved by SIAST, the College of Nursing Research Committee, and the University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Ethics Committee.

## Literature Review

The PLAR Needs Assessment was designed to provide the NEPS with an understanding of how PLAR may be used in a nursing program; to assess the level of perceived learning students with health care experience feel they bring to the NEPS; and to identify their level of interest in utilizing a PLAR process.

The findings of the literature review provided information regarding some best practices and critical issues regarding the utilization of PLAR in nursing programs, which can be used by the NEPS to examine the feasibility of establishing a PLAR process for the nursing baccalaureate program in Saskatchewan.

The results indicate that post-secondary institutions are in varying stages on a 'learning curve' with respect to developing and implementing a successful PLAR process. Some nursing programs are just developing PLAR processes. Others are finding it necessary to revise and improve upon their existing PLAR policies, procedures, and assessment methods, in order to balance the needs of learners and faculty/the institution, and to stimulate demand for PLAR from the student body. These institutions are now beginning to refine original PLAR guidelines, assessment tools, and criteria which were found to be too vague or too cumbersome to provide students with the tools needed to effectively and efficiently undergo a PLAR assessment. Faculty and assessors are beginning to offer alternative flexible forms of assessment to learners, such as: portfolio assessment; skill demonstrations; or workplace assessments that more effectively enable the learner provide evidence of their prior learning.

The design of a PLAR process in any institution must take into consideration the many factors that could impact student demand for these services, such as: high financial and human resource costs; arduous administrative requirements; inadequate communication to students of assessment guidelines and requirements resulting in wasted time and repetitious work; a lack of awareness and understanding of the PLAR process and the potential benefits; or, the risk that course credits obtained through PLAR will not be recognized by other formal post-secondary institutions and will be non-transferable.

They must also consider factors that could impede the successful delivery of PLAR services, such as an inability to secure adequate funding to meet the significant costs of PLAR (as mentioned earlier, some institutions have had to scale back or stop PLAR activities due to a lack of funding); the need for proper remuneration of faculty for providing these services, and a fair allocation of PLAR duties in addition to existing workloads; or the need to conduct faculty orientation and consultation sessions to achieve a greater commitment to and understanding of the PLAR process.

The literature review and case studies revealed several best practices to consider adopting when implementing or revising a PLAR process, including: the determination of actual costs for the development and delivery of PLAR advising and assessment services; securing a project champion and the necessary resources for PLAR developmental and implementation activities; preparation of PLAR course blueprints that describe courses in terms of intended course outcomes, and the criteria for specific skills and knowledge to be demonstrated; providing adequate orientation or training courses to the faculty and the students regarding the assessment process: offering flexible methods of assessment and perhaps modularizing courses to assist in facilitating "top-up" training; streamlining assessment process to minimize time, cost, and paperwork for PLAR candidates; and developing informational and promotional materials (hard copy and/or electronic) for students and faculty directed at the education and awareness of the PLAR process, policies, and procedures.

**Student Survey**

The findings of the student survey indicate there is majority support in the student body (three-quarters of the students surveyed) for utilizing PLAR to obtain credit for learning acquired outside of formal post-secondary training that meets the course intents of the NEPS. The full report of survey results is available in Appendix One.

Students indicated they had prior learning that could meet the majority of all of the course intents primarily for first and second year courses in the NEPS. Students indicated their prior learning has been obtained primarily through either formal post-secondary education or work experience.

Well over half of the students surveyed have some previous work experience in the health care industry. It was discovered that there is a large pool of students who have experience as Home Care/Special Care Aides. Although not formally educated, these individuals indicated they have a significant amount of prior learning. Additional occupational cohorts that also feel they meet the majority or all of the NEPS course intents are Licensed Practical Nurses and Emergency Medical Technicians.

For those students that indicated they had prior learning, the majority felt this learning was recent (within the last five years), and that they could provide evidence of the learning.

**Focus Group**

The findings from the student focus group session presented valuable insight into the students' perceptions and opinions regarding the level of prior learning individuals with health care experience may bring to the NEPS, and the level and type of participation students may be willing to provide for a PLAR process. The focus group concentrated on obtaining feedback from those occupational cohorts that had been identified in the student survey as having a significant level of prior learning, which included Home Care/Special Care Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Emergency Medical Technicians.

The students who participated in the focus group session feel there are clear discrepancies between the knowledge some students bring to the NEPS and what they are awarded credit for. They believe their prior work, academic, or volunteer/life experiences have prepared them well for the many of the clinical aspects and some human skills aspects of the first two years of the NEPS. Students who practice as Licensed Practical Nurses feel there are a broader range of courses that they have the required knowledge and skills for, but for which they have not received recognition or credit. For students with prior learning, some components of the NEPS are repetitive and are not adding to the student's knowledge of nursing. Furthermore, some students do not feel they are receiving value for the money or time they are putting toward their education.

The students indicated they would appreciate the opportunity to utilize flexible forms of assessment that would enable them to obtain credit for learning that they feel meets the course intents of specific NEPS courses, but for which they have not been able to have recognized through traditional credit granting processes. However, they did place some conditions on the use of PLAR. For instance, the assessment process would need to be flexible and tailored to the unique needs and learning background of the student. There would need to be specific and clear guidelines provided to the student regarding the course intents to be met. The assessor would have to conduct a fairly comprehensive preliminary assessment with the PLAR candidates to ensure they did not spend time, effort, and money demonstrating learning that was inadequate to be awarded credit for the course. Finally, the level of effort and cost of the assessment services would have to be a fraction of that for a normal course, in order for students to realize sufficient benefit to utilize PLAR services over traditional course attendance.

The need for a prior learning assessment and recognition process that can be applied on a case-by-case basis was demonstrated in the diversity of backgrounds presented during the focus group session. For instance, even within an occupational category, students possess various levels of experience, training, and knowledge. One student reported having 10 years of experience as a resident care aide. This student had the opportunity to work with a progressive institution that allowed her to attend numerous seminars, which enriched her knowledge and skill base, above what home care/special care aides in other institutions may learn or experience. The other students with experience as Home Care/Special Care Aides agreed that while they have all obtained good knowledge and practice of basic care principles in their jobs, their learning was not as extensive as this individual.

### Recommendations

The findings of the literature review, student survey, focus group session, and steering committee feedback provided valuable direction for the recommendations and next steps the NEPS should take with regard to Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

The following recommendations are proposed:

1. **The NEPS should continue with activities around the implementation and monitoring of a pilot course (NURS 115.3 Core Concepts of Care) for PLAR, in the fall session of 2003/04.**

The results of the student survey indicate there is majority support in the student body (three-quarters of the students surveyed) for utilizing PLAR to obtain credit for learning acquired outside of formal post-secondary training, which meets the course intents of the NEPS.

The student feedback from the focus group session confirmed the appropriateness of the plans the NEPS have been making for offering a pilot PLAR process for NURS 115.3 in 2003-2004 Regular Session. Students participants in the focus group believe their prior work, volunteer/life experiences, and academic formation has prepared them well for the many of the clinical aspects and for some human skills aspects of the first two years of the NEPS. NURS 115.3 was one of the first classes the students felt should be readied for PLAR. The students indicated that those learners with previous experience working in the health-care system working (i.e., LPNs, HC/SCAs, EMTs, etc.) were already competent regarding the basic concepts of care, and felt they should have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, especially in the practical portion of NURS 115.3.

2. **The NEPS should seek funding for and implement a cost/benefit analysis of undertaking a PLAR process in the nursing program.**
   - **Faculty orientation, development, assessment, and remuneration**
   - **Student orientation, workload/time, fees, PLAR student liaison**
   - **Institutional support implications**
   - **Transferability of PLAR credits to other institutions**

Both the literature review and direct contacts emphasized a number of critical issues that may hinder any proposed PLAR initiatives. These issues revolve around insufficient funding and human resources to deliver PLAR and support students through the process; low subscription rates by students and prospective students due to arduous time and cost requirements; as well as the risk that a PLAR credit gained at one institution may not be recognized by another due to non-standardized reporting requirements.

The unanimous advice is to ensure that all costs and resource requirements are identified in the planning stages leading to a PLAR process, and that sufficient funding is in place to meet the significant costs of developing *and* implementing PLAR (as mentioned earlier, some institutions have had to scale back or stop PLAR activities due to a lack of initial or continued funding).

As a result, it is recommended the NEPS undergo a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether it is feasible to develop and deliver a PLAR process that meets the needs of both the institution and the students.

3. **Provided the cost/benefit analysis indicates it is feasible to proceed further with PLAR, the NEPS should seek funding for PLAR development and implementation of selected NEPS courses as identified in the project.**

4. **The NEPS should conduct an ongoing review of transfer credit for formal learning from accredited post-secondary institutions.**

In recognition that student learning, which meets the learning outcomes of a NEPS course, can be previously acquired from another accredited post-secondary institution(s), and that other types of educational programs are continuously evolving, the NEPS will need to continue their review of transfer of credit possibilities on an ongoing basis.

5. **The NEPS should demonstrate continued commitment to processes that acknowledge prior learning of NEPS students.**

    a. **Exploring NEPS curriculum activities supportive of PLAR, bridging, and other RPL options.**

    b. **Exploring other health-related initiatives that are currently undertaking PLAR strategies to enhance career laddering.**

    c. **Supporting interdisciplinary educational programming that allows for RPL possibilities within the health disciplines.**

Secondary research and ongoing communication with health-care sector partners has revealed there are several initiatives currently being undertaken or in the planning stages to examine the potential for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) strategies (Saskatchewan Learning includes three major forms of learning recognition in its definition of RPL: Credit Transfer, Qualification Recognition, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition).

The NEPS should continue to engage in curriculum review activities/programming and participate on interdisciplinary committees in order to: share knowledge and best practices gained from research, avoid duplication of research efforts, or to learn about other options of recognizing learning to facilitate the faster progression of students through the NEPS.

**Next Steps**

The NEPS recognizes the need for the ongoing review of related health care programs and initiatives for RPL options and alternative approaches to credit granting. As part of its ongoing curriculum process, the NEPS is already addressing recommendations number one and four. For recommendation number one, the NEPS is in the process of launching a pilot PLAR course for NURS 115.3 Core Concepts of Care in the academic year 2003/04.

Additional actions the NEPS will be taking in the future as a result of the needs assessment findings and recommendations include:

1. **The development of a communication strategy regarding the release of the needs assessment report.**
    a. **Publish electronic copy of report on SIAST and U of S websites.**
    b. **The Steering Committee members will be responsible for disseminating the final report to its respective constituents/members.**
2. **The submission of a request for funding to explore possible strategies regarding recognition of prior learning in the NEPS.**
3. **The implementation of recommendation number five to demonstrate continued commitment to processes that acknowledge prior learning of NEPS students.**
    a. **Exploring NEPS curriculum activities supportive of PLAR, bridging, and other RPL options.**
    b. **Exploring other health-related initiatives that are currently undertaking PLAR strategies to enhance career laddering.**
    c. **Supporting interdisciplinary educational programming that allows for RPL possibilities within the health disciplines.**

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) is the only nursing education program in the province that prepares graduates for licensure as registered nurses. The NEPS is offered through a collaborative academic venture between the College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and the Nursing Division, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) Kelsey and Wascana Campuses.

The program is a four-year degree program. Part-time study is an option. All courses must be completed within seven years of commencing the program. Graduates of the program may apply for licensure with the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association (SRNA).

The complete program is offered in both Saskatoon and Regina. In Saskatoon, students attend classes at Kelsey Campus for the first 2 years of the NEPS, and the University of Saskatchewan for the second 2 years of the program. In Regina, classes are held at Wascana Campus for all years of the program. Students attend the University of Regina as visiting University of Saskatchewan students in order to take their non-nursing courses.

Although the program is designed for completion in four years, there are two "fast-track" options for students who have completed their non-nursing courses prior to the end of Year 3 of the program. One option allows students to complete the program in 3 1/2 years, finishing in December of their 4th year. The second allows students to complete the program in a little more than 3 years, finishing at the end of September of the 4th year. Space may be limited in the "fast-track" options. Graduates must be of good character and must pass registration exams before they are eligible to practice.[1]

The NEPS has a formal process in place that allows for a transfer of credits for accredited post-secondary courses previously taken by those admitted into the program. Once admitted to the NEPS, the University of Saskatchewan is responsible for assessing students' formal education from other post-secondary institutions for advanced standing (i.e., transfer of credit). For example, graduates of the SIAST Practical Nurse Program are awarded advanced standing for a number of courses depending on the year of graduation, if they are currently licensed. As well, SIAST has developed a course to bridge the anatomy and physiology taken in the Practical Nurse Program, so that the graduates who enter the NEPS have the equivalent of the anatomy and physiology required for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree.

Advanced standing for other courses from post-secondary institutions is reviewed upon request from a student. Once it has been determined that an advanced standing will be awarded for such a course, any student having completed that course will receive advanced standing.

### *Proposal to Assess the Need for a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Process in the NEPS*

In 2002, Saskatchewan Learning approached the NEPS to consider undertaking an assessment of the need for a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process in the NEPS. In response, the College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan and the Nursing Division, SIAST put forth a joint research proposal, which has been funded through JobStart/Future Skills Sector

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[1] http://www.usask.ca/calendar/nursing/programs/neps/

Partnerships Program, Saskatchewan Learning, to investigate the potential use of PLAR as one possible strategy that may facilitate the progression of students through the NEPS.

In post-secondary education, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a systematic process of assessing, recognizing, and awarding credit for learning (knowledge, skills, values, etc.) that meets the course intents of an accredited course or program, but which has been gained outside of formal education through a variety of means, such as work, non-credit courses, industry training, volunteer activities, life experiences, and so on.

Currently, there is not a process in place within the program that would allow NEPS students to receive credit for prior learning obtained through non-formal means. In order to determine whether there is a need to develop and implement a PLAR process in the NEPS, the services of Calibre Strategic Services (SK) Inc. and Pulse Research Limited were engaged to conduct a needs assessment.

Professor Mary MacDonald, Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs, College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan; Ms. Candace Skrapek, Faculty/Clinical Placement Coordinator, NEPS, Nursing Division, SIAST Kelsey Campus; and Ms. Norma Wildeman, Program Head, NEPS, Nursing Division, SIAST Wascana Campus were assigned to jointly oversee the Needs Assessment as project managers.

A steering committee also was formed to support the development, implementation, and information dissemination of the results of the needs assessment. The committee was comprised of key stakeholder groups representing the province's professional health associations, unions, educational institutions, and key government stakeholders.

The needs assessment consisted of three main research activities: a literature review; a survey of over 270 NEPS students; and a focus group with eight NEPS students to examine select issues in further detail. Together these three complementary activities provided insight into whether there is a need for a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process in the NEPS by:

1) Providing the NEPS with an understanding of how PLAR is utilized in other nursing baccalaureate/diploma programs or other related heath-care programs, and its level of success (literature review);
2) Identifying the level of demand the NEPS students, with previous health-care or other related prior learning, may have for utilizing PLAR in the program (student survey/focus group); and,
3) Assessing whether students perceive they have a significant level of relevant prior learning to merit developing a PLAR process (student survey/focus group).

The following report provides a summary of the findings for the needs assessment research activities, and identifies an action plan for exploring the potential of utilizing recognition of prior learning strategies in the NEPS.

# 2 METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Literature Review

In order to develop a foundation of knowledge regarding PLAR for the NEPS Needs Assessment project, the consultants conducted a two-stage literature review. The first stage involved a general search of relevant hard copy and electronic literature regarding the implementation of PLAR in post-secondary institutions.

The second stage of the literature review involved a more focused search for information to understand how the PLAR process has been applied to nursing baccalaureate or diploma programs, or other health-care programs. Also of interest was the level of success this method of assessment and credit granting has had in nursing programs to date. To accomplish this, the consultants contacted representatives of Nursing Programs in Canada and abroad, via e-mail, and asked them to share their experiences with PLAR. Responses were only received from post-secondary institutions in Canada, with British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario contacts having the most experience in the development and implementation of PLAR.

## 2.2 NEPS Student Survey

In the second stage of the needs assessment, a survey was conducted to assess how many individuals, once admitted to the NEPS perceive they have a significant level of relevant prior learning to merit a PLAR process; and, to identify the proportion of individuals that would be interested in utilizing PLAR to facilitate a faster progression through the NEPS.

In order to ensure an effective use of resources and to make the scope of the primary research more manageable, the target population for the survey was limited to students that are currently enrolled in the NEPS, rather than individuals working in Saskatchewan's Health Sector as a whole. It was felt that individuals who were not currently enrolled in the NEPS might have had difficulty completing the survey, as it was necessary to include several questions that required individuals to relate their prior learning to the NEPS course intents. Furthermore, it is the NEPS students who in the shortest term have the potential for accelerated graduation due to a PLAR process, if one was implemented.

Although the population was narrowed to NEPS students, the sample size was still very large (over 750 students) and provided the appropriate cross-section of individuals with various health-sector experiences (i.e., Licensed Practical Nurses, Home Care/Special Care Aides, Emergency Medical Technicians, etc.).

In order to recruit students to participate in the survey, the NEPS-PLAR project managers and the representatives from the Calibre Group of Companies conducted classroom visitations for all first, second, and third year NEPS students. Fourth year students were not available to participate in the survey, as they were engaged in practicums throughout the province.

The classroom visitations took place during the week of January 20th.

- SIAST Wascana Campus, January 20th, 2003
- SIAST Kelsey Campus, January 20th & 21st, 2003
- University of Saskatchewan, January 20th, 2003

With the permission of respective faculty, the representatives gave a 15-minute informational presentation to students that briefly introduced the study, explained the PLAR concept, provided an overview of the survey, and answered any questions or concerns students had. At this time, a package also was handed out to each student, containing a cover letter regarding the survey and a paper questionnaire. The letter served to inform the students that by completing and returning the questionnaire they were consenting to participate and permitting the researchers to use the data in the manner explained in the letter. A copy of the cover letter and survey instrument may be found in Appendix Two.

Students were allowed to take the paper questionnaire home for a period of one week. At the end of the week, or any time prior to this, students were asked to return the questionnaires to a secured provincial ballot box that was located in the NEPS offices on each respective campus.

Students were assured that their participation was not required as a condition of their academic career, and that they would not be penalized in anyway should they have declined to participate. Students were also assured that they were free to withdraw from the survey at any time, prior to placing the questionnaire in the ballot box.

Once the completed questionnaires were collected, the consultant collated and analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Any open-ended responses were analyzed for content, or coded into SPSS where appropriate. Frequency distribution results were tabulated on all questions and, where appropriate, cross tabulations were performed to identify significant relationships between/among variables.

### 2.3 NEPS Student Focus Group

In review of the preliminary results of the student survey the project managers determined, in consultation with the Steering Committee, that it would be beneficial to hold two focus group sessions with NEPS students to further explore select issues regarding the students' prior learning and the potential of utilizing a PLAR process in the NEPS. Of particular interest were the experiences and opinions of those occupational groups identified in the survey as being cohorts of students who felt they had significant prior learning experience. This included Home Care/Special Care Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Emergency Medical Technicians. The first focus group session was scheduled in Regina on March 3rd, 2003 at the Wascana SIAST campus, and the second in Saskatoon on March 10th, 2003 at the Kelsey SIAST campus. NEPS students were initially provided with a cover letter regarding the focus group sessions during the class visitations in January, 2003. A copy of the letter of invitation may be viewed in Appendix Three. At this time, the students were invited to contact the consultant if they were interested in participating in a potential focus group session. The students were assured that their participation was not required as a condition of their academic career, and that they would not be penalized in anyway should they decline to participate in the focus group. Students were also informed that they would not be required to state their opinion(s) on all of the discussion topics unless they are willing to do so. Students were also assured that they were free to withdraw from the focus group at any time, even if they gave initial consent to participate.

The consultants received a limited number of calls from students following this invitation. In order to hold the two focus group sessions with a minimum number of eight participants per group, it was necessary to extend the invitation to participate once again at the end of February, 2003. In order to maintain the confidentiality of students' contact information, announcements were made by first-to-third year faculty in class to invite NEPS students to attend the respective focus group session at their campus. Students were informed that there was special interest in having students with training or experience as Home Care/Special Care Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Emergency Medical Technicians attend these sessions. Arrangements were made to hold the first focus group in Regina, but unfortunately due to a lack of participation the focus group had to be cancelled.

The focus group in Saskatoon went ahead on March 10th with seven of the nine confirmed participants attending. The group consisted of two Licensed Practical Nurses with work experience, and five Home Care/Special Care Aides with varying degrees of work experience. In order to obtain a minimum of eight opinions, the consultants invited an interested NEPS student from Regina, with experience as an EMT, to participate in a one-on-one telephone interview using the same materials and moderator's guide as in the focus group sessions. This student's comments have been amalgamated into the findings of the focus group session.

The two-hour focus group session, moderated by the consultants, followed a participatory format with a series of exercises being completed by the students after which ensued a discussion of their comments. The session also included a brief overview of PLAR, at the outset, to ensure that all participants had a realistic understanding of PLAR and what this process may entail for students. The overview included a general definition of what PLAR is, a sample outline of the activities that may be involved in a PLAR process, the four requirements upon which an assessor may judge the evidence provided (validity, authenticity, currency, and sufficiency), and an example of the potential fees to the student for a PLAR assessment. A copy of the one-page summary that was provided to students as reference material during this overview may be found in Appendix Three.

The moderator guide for the focus group session may be found in Appendix Three. The script was developed to obtain a better understanding of the level of prior learning this group of students with previous health-care experience possessed, and their opinions regarding PLAR and the issues around its development and implementation. The discussion topics were as follows:

- Students were given the opportunity to reflect on the specific prior learning they had obtained through work and other experiences that related to the course intents in the NEPS, and why they felt this learning could or could not meet the intents of the NEPS.

- Students were asked to consider all of their experiences to date and then to place themselves back at the point of entry into the NEPS. In this frame of mind, they were asked to provide their opinion regarding:
  a. The benefits they felt PLAR could provide to them in completing their degree;
  b. The method of assessment they thought would be most suitable for demonstrating their learning to assessors, and why;
  c. The length of time they would be willing to dedicate in order to gather and demonstrate evidence of their prior learning; and,
  d. The level of fees they felt were appropriate to charge for PLAR services.

Students were also cautioned to be mindful of the fact that the NEPS has to ensure an appropriate quality and level of learning to ensure knowledgeable and qualified graduates, and meet the requirements of the provincial and national RN licensing bodies, and health-care employers.

- Students were provided with a list of courses from each year in the NEPS. The courses that comprised the list were those for which the largest proportion students, who participated in the preceding survey, had indicated they met the majority or all of the course intents. The students were then asked to consider this list, and comment on which classes they felt should be initially available for challenge if the NEPS were to offer PLAR services in the future. They were invited to add or remove courses to the list as they saw fit, keeping in mind implementing PLAR can be a costly and time-consuming process.

- Finally, the students were asked to identify any potential issues or barriers they felt may arise in the potential implementation and utilization of PLAR in the NEPS.

The moderator ensured that all participants had an equal opportunity to participate. As part of regular procedures, the focus group was audio-taped to assist the consultants in documenting and analyzing the session.

Those students who participated in the focus group were required to sign a consent and confidentiality form prior to joining the focus group session that stated they were participating on a voluntary basis, they agreed to keep the discussions held during the focus group confidential, and that they permitted the researchers to analyze and summarize the aggregate results of the focus group in a final report.

### 2.4 Permission for Student Participation in Research

In order to work with NEPS students, it was necessary to make a submission to the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board, the College of Nursing Research Committee, University of Saskatchewan, and the Nursing Division of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology that detailed the purpose of the research, the target participants, and the methodology involved.

Each authority reviewed the submission to verify that the research would be conducted in an ethical manner and did not pose any risk or harm to the students participating. The standards for which the submission was judged follow national standards that have been set for ethical conduct for research involving humans. The College of Nursing Research Committee gave their permission to conduct the research on December 21, 2002. The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board gave approval to proceed with the research on January 15, 2003. The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology also granted approval for the study.

# 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

## 3.1 Secondary Research Objectives

Although there is an abundance of general information regarding Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), there is less known about the success of implementing this type of assessment and credit granting process in the area of post-secondary nursing programs.

The Calibre Group of Companies undertook a literature review and conducted telephone interviews to learn from the experiences of post-secondary institutions that have developed and implemented a PLAR process in a nursing baccalaureate or diploma program, or other related health-care programs.

## 3.2 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is an innovative educational concept related to providing flexible assessment options for learners, regardless of their academic, personal, or professional background. In post-secondary education, PLAR is defined as a systematic process of assessing, recognizing, and awarding educational credit for experiential learning that meets the learning outcomes of an accredited course or program, but which has been gained outside of formal education through a variety of non-formal (i.e., workplace or industry based training, non-credit courses), or informal means (i.e., volunteer activities, life experiences, self instruction, family responsibilities, hobbies).[2]

PLAR is not to be confused with Transfer of Credit, which is the recognition and granting of credit for a formal course that has been successfully completed in another accredited post-secondary institution.

### 3.2.1 The PLAR Process

Although each institution and/or program will develop its own policies and procedures regarding PLAR, generally there are four common activities that occur during a PLAR process.

1. Identification and Initiation: To begin the PLAR process, a student must self-identify that he/she has prior learning for which he/she has not received formal credit at the current institution (transfer of credit), but which meets the learning intents of a course/program. At this time, the student would consult with the appropriate PLAR advisor (i.e., PLAR Coordinator or faculty member in charge of PLAR for a particular course) to discuss the potential for utilizing PLAR. The student would typically complete a self-audit and review the results with the PLAR advisor. If this ‘preliminary assessment’ indicates there is a good possibility the student could successfully challenge the course, he/she may work with the advisor to understand the requirements for the course that must be demonstrated and to develop an action plan for assessment.

2. Documentation and Preparation: In this stage, evidence is gathered that authenticates the student's prior learning (i.e., development of a portfolio, work samples, performance appraisals, etc.) and/or the student prepares to undertake a demonstration of their knowledge (i.e., challenge exam, interview, skill demonstration, workplace assessment,

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[2] "Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Referral Guide". Saskatchewan Learning. Regina. March 2003. pp. 6.

etc.). The student may be required to take an orientation seminar on portfolio development.

3. Assessment: The student undergoes the assessment, and the PLAR advisor/assessor or faculty member reviews the evidence presented to determine if it meets the established learning outcomes for the course.

4. Recognition: If the challenge is successful, the student will be awarded partial or full credit for the course being challenged. This may take the form of a letter grade or a PLAR designation on the student's official transcript.[3, 4, 5]

### 3.2.2 Methods of Assessment

There are a variety of flexible assessment methods available, which may be used independently or in combination, to determine whether a student's prior learning meets the course intents of the course or program being challenged. These include, but are not limited to, the following[6]:

Challenge Exam or Assignment: An exam or assignment (written or oral) that is designed to validate the knowledge of the candidate as it relates to course requirements. A challenge exam/assignment may be the same that is given to students who formally attend the course. It is limited to questions that are directly related to the learning objectives/outcomes of the course, not to information that would be available only by regular attendance in the classroom.

Standardized Test: Similar to a Challenge Exam. However, someone usually develops this test or exam other than the assessor. It is focused around widely recognized standards (as set by a department or professional/sectoral organization) that are equivalent to the course objectives.

Products/Portfolio: Documents or objects that have been produced by the candidate and demonstrate tangible proof of learning. These may include but are not limited to letters of reference from supervisors, patients, or others; performance appraisals, work, or learning journal/log, etc.

Demonstration: Simulation or actual presentation of candidate's abilities, which may be live, recorded, or videotaped. The demonstration may include but is not limited to such activities as completing a lab assignment or procedure; role-playing; or simulation of some aspect of patient care.

Workplace Assessment: Similar to a demonstration. The candidate is observed performing tasks as a part of normal work routine, or as specifically assigned, in the place of work.

Interview: Oral Questioning. The PLAR interview is focused around course objectives and may include techniques such as open-ended questions, case studies, and prepared analyses. The interview is used to clarify areas of learning, and may be used in parallel with other methods, as a sole method of assessment, and/or as a means to ensure authenticity of products.

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[3] Collaborative Nursing Program of British Columbia. "Assessing Prior Learning. A Guide for Advisors and Assessors in Nursing". Ministry of Advanced Education. Victoria. 2001. pp. 6.

[4] http://www.siast.sk.ca/siast/admissions/plar.htm

[5] Saskatchewan Learning. "Recognition of Prior Learning. Referral Guide." Regina. 2003. pp.7.

[6] http://www.kwantlen.bc.ca/calendar/crdprvlrn.html

Regardless of the method of assessment chosen, assessors systematically review the evidence provided to ensure it meets four technical requirements of assessment: validity, authenticity, currency, and sufficiency. Validity refers to how relevant the evidence presented is to the learning outcome. Authenticity refers to whether or not the evidence provided was actually done by the applicant. Currency refers to how recent the evidence provided is, and sufficiency refers to whether students can demonstrate that they adequately meet the learning outcomes being challenged (here quality of evidence is more important than quantity).[7]

### 3.2.3 Potential Benefits of PLAR

In her publication, "Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition, A Guide For University Faculty & Administrators" (1999), Dr. Angelina Wong, with the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, outlined some of the potential benefits of PLAR for students and post-secondary institutions[8].

PLAR programs can provide students with:

- Increasing opportunities for lifelong learning;
- Enabling completion of formal studies in a shorter period of time;
- Reducing duplication of learning;
- Potentially reducing the cost of obtaining formal credentials;
- Providing more appropriate placement in the program;
- Increasing motivation for learning through working with new and challenging content instead of what the student already knows and can do; and,
- Raising self-esteem through recognition of prior learning, both formal and non-formal.

PLAR programs can also enable institutions to:

- Replenish enrollment of students to fill gaps in class numbers at a range of levels created by attrition;
- Acceleration of graduation rates as a result of reducing duplication of learning and more appropriate placement in programs;
- Retention of control over program quality by systematically assessing the applicant's prior learning;
- Streamlining of administrative procedures, which can potentially enhance student services overall;
- Enhancement of faculty interest in curriculum development through their involvement in the clarification of academic standards and expected course intents required for PLAR;
- Liaison with industry and other educational providers, which may lead to mutually beneficial relationships; and,
- Enhancement of institution's image through a public perception of responsiveness to needs of students, especially those with jobs and family responsibilities.

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[7] Collaborative Nursing Program of British Columbia. "Make the Most of What You Know and Can Do: Earn a Credit in Nursing. A Prior Learning Assessment Guide for Learners". Ministry of Advanced Education. Victoria. 2001. pp. 6.

[8] Wong, Angelina, Dr. "Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition, A Guide for University Faculty & Administrators". University Extension Press. University of Saskatchewan. Saskatoon. 1999. pp. 9-10.

### 3.3 Introduction of PLAR in Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions

Post-secondary institutions at the College level were the first to begin utilizing PLAR in Canada, primarily for the purpose of granting academic credit. In 1980, the Red River College in Winnipeg, Manitoba was the first institution to utilize a PLAR process in Canada, and did so in their nursing program. Subsequently, the First Nations Technical Institute and Mohawk College in Ontario followed suit, implementing PLAR in their institutions 1982 and 1985 respectively.

In 1984, Quebec CEGEPs (public colleges) initiated the first province-wide implementation of PLAR. In 1992, the Government of Ontario began a system-wide implementation for Ontario colleges. From 1992 to the present, a number of other post-secondary institutions and provincial governments throughout Canada have developed PLAR policies and procedures at the secondary and/or postsecondary levels. The adoption of PLAR continues to be more prevalent at the college level across Canada, although its usefulness has begun to be recognized by some universities.

#### 3.3.1 Recent History of PLAR Activity at the University of Saskatchewan and The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

In the fall of 2000, Saskatchewan Learning launched a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Enhancement Funding Initiative with the objective of providing ongoing resources and support to the coordinators of eleven PLAR pilot projects. The projects were undertaken in various Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions, of which the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) both participated.

*The University of Saskatchewan*

The College of Agriculture and the College of Nursing both obtained funding for pilot PLAR projects through the Enhancement Funding Initiative. The College of Nursing wanted to establish a PLAR process for a physical assessment course in the Post-Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program. Champions of PLAR in the College of Nursing, U of S, had been working for several years prior to collect and analyze information regarding the use of PLAR in undergraduate nursing programs, in particular in relation to clinical courses.

The efforts of this pilot project culminated with the College of Nursing offering PLAR to students in the Post Registration Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program for NURS 318.3 Health Assessment, in the 2002/03 Regular Session.

As of April 2002, the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) offers Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition on the basis of Challenge for Credit. Challenge for Credit allows the university to grant credits to those students who can demonstrate that they have mastered the knowledge and skills associated with the satisfactory completion of specific university courses through work experience, independent study, or from non-degree courses. Students may apply for the challenge for credit process only after they have been admitted into the U of S. Students who successfully challenge a course do not receive a percentage grade on their transcript; rather the transcript will indicate a credit by challenge designation. Each department or college can choose whether they want to offer the challenge for credit option, and have the responsibility of determining which of its courses may be subject to a challenge if they do so. There is a $75.00

application fee for students and the PLAR assessment fee is approximately one half the charge of the course being challenged.[9]

*The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)*

The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) formally introduced Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) to its campuses in 1996 and has since established itself as a leader in the field of PLAR. Over the past few years, SIAST has expanded on its PLAR activities, increasing funding allocated to this initiative, and modifying policy guidelines that had previously restricted award of 100% credit toward a program for prior learning. SIAST's PLAR policies and procedures have been established on an institutional level. There is a $30 application fee and a $150 assessment fee or the course tuition fee, whichever is less, for SIAST's PLAR services.[10]

SIAST's PLAR Reports for 1999-2000 and 2002 indicate that there is a notable increase in the demand for PLAR services. The number of learners that have applied to SIAST for PLAR increased by 126% between 1998 and 2001, from 158 persons to 357 persons. Even more significant is the number of course requests that these learners are seeking to apply to SIAST's PLAR services. In 2000-01, SIAST received 965 course requests, up 304% from 239 course requests in 1998/99.[11]

With support of Saskatchewan Learning's PLAR Enhancement Funding Initiative, SIAST has developed an online PLAR Inventory Database of all PLAR-ready courses.

Although the NEPS does not yet have a PLAR process in place, SIAST's Nursing Division, which administers first and second year of the program in the NEPS, has just prepared one first-year course for PLAR (NURS 115.3 Core Concepts of Care), which will be offered in the 2003-04 Regular Session.

### 3.3.2 Guiding Principles of PLAR

During the mid-1990s, a number of national organizations began to recognize the potential of PLAR and provided support to institutions undertaking PLAR initiatives. The Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFBD) adopted PLAR as one of its priority policy development areas. In 1997, the CLFBD developed fourteen guiding principles as a framework for the development of an effective and fair national system for the recognition of prior learning. The Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board provided an adapted set of these guidelines in their "Provincial Framework for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Saskatchewan" (2002) document.

**Note**: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is used by Saskatchewan Learning to encompass three major forms of learning recognition, of which PLAR is just one form (i.e., Credit Transfer - including Bridging or Advanced Placements, Qualification Recognition, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition).[12]

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[9] http://www.usask.ca/calendar/admission/transfercredit/

[10] http://ww.siast.sk.ca/siast/admissions/plar.htm

[11] SIAST Planning, Research and Development Division Institutional Research Office. "Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Reports for 2000-2001 & 1999-2000".

[12] Saskatchewan Learning. "Recognition of Prior Learning. Referral Guide." Regina. 2003. pp.3.

The guiding principles are as follows:

Accessibility: Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL) must be accessible and recognize the unique needs and abilities of individuals. The delivery of RPL services must also be inclusive and respectful of the diversity of Saskatchewan's population. While the process is voluntary, all learners will be encouraged and supported in accessing RPL services

Transparency: The RPL process must be transparent. Criteria and standards of assessment, as well as RPL processes and outcomes, must be well understood.
Effective Service: All personnel involved in RPL should have appropriate skills and knowledge, relevant to their roles and responsibilities in the RPL process.

High-Quality Assessment: Assessors are content specialists, and the assessment tools are valid and reliable. Learners will receive recognition and credit for demonstrated knowledge, skills, and judgements, and not solely for experience.

Relevance: The RPL outcomes will be recognized by individuals, employers, educational institutions, professional regulatory bodies, and credit awarded will be transferable between different organizations.

Flexibility: Different assessment mechanisms and procedures are necessary to accommodate the needs of different individuals.

Efficiency: RPL processes are efficient and timely by making the best use of resources.

Right of Appeal: If a person is not satisfied with the RPL assessment, an appeal process must be available.

### 3.4 Current PLAR Utilization in Other Canadian Nursing Programs

Across Canada, proactive nursing programs are beginning to explore innovative and flexible forms of assessment and credit granting to meet the increasing needs of adult learners who come into the programs with previous knowledge and experience, as well as to meet the increasing national demand for qualified health-care workers.

A review of literature coupled with feedback from PLAR contacts at nursing programs throughout Canada has provided some insight to the best practices and issues that have formed from their efforts over the past several years to develop and implement PLAR at these institutions. Each of the following excerpts delivers a lesson that can assist others in understanding the necessary components of a successful PLAR process for nursing programs, or any other post-secondary program.

### 3.4.1 Collaborative Nursing Program, British Columbia

The Collaborative Nursing Program (CNP) in B.C. consists of ten nursing school partners in Southern British Columbia. In the late 1990's, at a time when there was a critical shortage of qualified health care workers, and an abundance of adult learners with experience, the CNP had the advantage of receiving designated funding for a three-year term from the government. This funding was provided specifically to look at prior learning practices across the province. [13]

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[13] http://www.cnpbc.org/cnphistory.html

Over the past three years, this seed money has provided the CNP with an opportunity to work with colleagues from partner institutions to develop a strategic plan for implementing PLAR. The overall goal of CNP's Prior Learning Assessment Initiative is to develop a standardized learner-centered model for consistent quality PLAR implementation and valuation across the CNP.

The project manager for the PLAR Initiative has gained valuable experience over the past three years regarding the successful development and implementation of PLAR in post-secondary nursing programs. The activities in the first year of this initiative involved a great deal of faculty development and PLAR orientation. It was important to mentor the faculty so that they could advise others, become better data gatherers, and to take on the role of an assessor.

The second year of the initiative required undertaking the critical work of developing "PLAR Blueprints", which involved having the faculty at each CNP member institution prepare the courses in the nursing program for PLAR. It took some time for faculty to develop course outcomes for the courses that were PLAR assessable. It was simply not enough to pick up a course outline and use it for guidance and assessment purposes; work needed to be done to translate the course outline into a clear and concise PLAR assessment tool.

The PLAR project manager discovered there are a number of activities that must be undertaken concurrently in order to facilitate the development and implementation of PLAR in a nursing program: achieve institutional/administrative and faculty buy-in; locate dedicated expertise on-site; develop a framework of policies and procedures specific to the program; put in place the tools and resources necessary to deliver the assessment services (this includes readying courses for PLAR), and maintain ongoing communication to stakeholders, among other activities.

There have also been challenges to overcome in implementing PLAR. If PLAR is to be integrated and sustained in a program, there must be an effort to look at how this can be accomplished from a curriculum viewpoint. CNP has found that it was not successful if it tried to run PLAR alongside a program; rather, it had to be folded into the curriculum as an educational reform initiative. The question then becomes how to understand and facilitate change. CNP's PLAR project manager tried to include individuals who were already change agents or innovators in the development of PLAR within a nursing program or institution, and tried to identify best practices throughout the implementation process. It was very important for her to have a network to support and sustain PLAR.

In the CNP's experience, the utilization of PLAR in nursing programs can create an issue around the number of available seats in any given year. If a student successfully receives PLAR credit for a course(s), there may not be a seat available in an upper year or they may leave a seat empty in a particular cohort. This can create a dilemma for faculty in ensuring placement of students in the program.

The transferability of a PLAR credit to other institutions is a current issue. For instance, in the CNP, eight of the partner institutions have a designation of PLAR on the official transcripts with or without a letter grade, and two institutions have letter grades with no PLAR designation. This may be problematic for students who wish to transfer between institutions or provinces. The CNP hopes to move toward removing PLAR designations on official transcripts.[14]

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[14] http://www.cnpbc.org/PLA/issues.html

Another issue involves the struggle between over assessment and fair assessment. Many faculty try to maintain a credible and rigorous assessment so that they are not seen as 'lowering the bar'. However, it is important to manage expectations better and to not treat PLAR students any differently than regular students attending the course.

It is also very important to include a variety of flexible forms of assessment. For instance, there are several alternative health care programs and occupations, such as resident care attendants. These individuals have no credentials, but do have a lot of experience. An alternative method of 'credit assessment and recognition' is to implement a workplace-based PLAR, and develop the tools necessary to assess learners at their worksites. Administrators may wish to accompany this with an interview to delve into the more theory-based learning required.

Another option is to consider 'top-up' learning in instances where an applicant has successfully demonstrated a majority of the required competencies, however, there is still a portion of the course for which they don't have the required level of knowledge. In these circumstances, some CNP assessors have asked students to complete additional assignments or modules.

The project manager feels that, once the existing barriers have been addressed, PLAR has the potential to create an increasing number of graduates to meet the industry and public need.

Presently, the CNP and its member institutions will need to find alternative sources of funding to continue their efforts as the government funding for this initiative expires as of March 31, 2003.

### 3.4.2 Camosun College (CNP Partner), British Columbia

Camosun College participates in the Collaborative Nursing Program (CNP). Camosun began providing PLAR in their Nursing Program in 1998, and have developed some departmental policies and procedures in place around PLAR. However, they have not been able to provide these services in the 2002/03 term due to lack of funding.

Notably, Camosun did not have policies in place to identify faculty workload and remuneration, and consequently the faculty had been providing PLAR assessment services "off the side of their desk". Although the faculty was committed, they were not being recognized for their efforts and eventually became worn out. It is important to address the issue of reimbursement in order to gain the commitment of faculty in setting up the structures required for PLAR.

### 3.4.3 North Island College (CNP Partner), British Columbia

The North Island College (NIC) offers a nursing diploma program, and is currently working with Malaspina University College to develop a joint baccalaureate program. They have utilized PLAR in their nursing diploma program, primarily in first year courses (i.e., semester one courses, and a portion of semester two). However, NIC has not received as many applicants as expected for the amount of time and resources that were spent to develop and implement the PLAR process. In fact, they have not had applicants for some time. NIC surmised that this may be because the PLAR process is quite arduous for students, who are also required to pay a substantial fee, and there is a risk they will only receive PLAR for a portion of the course, or not receive credit at all. These factors act as disincentives for the students to undertake PLAR, resulting in a perception that it would be just as beneficial (time, cost, etc.) to take the course. However, NIC felt that as they begin to offer third and fourth year courses for PLAR there may be a greater number of applicants drawn from the post-RN population.

NIC's faculty primarily assess students' prior learning through a challenge process, portfolio assessment, or a combination of the two. Challenge procedures may include comprehensive, summative written, oral, and/or performance tests (including laboratory and/or work-site assessments) or assignments. Portfolio assisted assessments are typically used by NIC's Nursing Program, and usually involve a combination of documentation, skills demonstrations, assignments, and sometimes tests.

Nursing students are charged a fee of 75% of the tuition for the course being challenged. The fee is based on credits requested, not awarded. If the assessment also requires more in-depth skill demonstrations, such as site visits or clinical appraisals, there are additional charges to cover faculty time. As well, students are required to take a PLAR orientation course for a fee of $60.00 before they can commence the assessment process.

### 3.4.4 Malaspina University College (CNP Partner), British Columbia

PLAR was established at Malaspina University College to meet students' repeated requests for recognition of their prior learning and experience. The courses available for PLAR within Malaspina's Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program are listed below. The first cohort that has shown an interest are those learners who wish to obtain credit for first year courses, including lab or clinical portions. The next group to show a higher level of interest is what is deemed the "sunrise group", who are registered nurses (with diplomas) returning to obtain a baccalaureate in nursing. Malaspina has found that the majority of PLAR requests have been from the registered nurses for third and fourth year courses.

First Year:
- NURS 115: Health I: Health Styles
- NURS 116: Health II: Facilitating Health in Families
- NURS 135: Self & Other I: Self-Awareness
- NURS 136: Self & Others II: Interpersonal Relationships

Third Year:
- NURS 341: Nursing Inquiry
- NURS 350: Health Promotion
- NURS 351: Nursing Practice VI
- NURS 353: Self and Others III: Reflections on Caring Practice

Fourth Year:
- NURS 430: Health/Professional Growth: Nurses Influencing Change
- NURS 431: Nursing Practice VII: Nurses Influencing Change
- NURS 460: Professional Growth: Nursing Research
- NURS 491: Nursing Practice VIII

A student registered in the program must apply for PLAR, in writing, to the Coordinator of the Baccalaureate Nursing Program the semester preceding the one offering the course identified for PLAR. This application requires that the student submit a personal profile.

The documentation or evidence that is required to demonstrate the prior learning will be determined by the faculty member in consultation with the student. The PLAR requirements are individualized for the course and the student. Evidence may be presented through a variety of methods, such as: portfolio; skills demonstration; interview process; course descriptions and transcripts; evidence of workshops and seminars previously attended (such as certificates, course outlines and receipts); copies of papers; copies of projects/project reports; letters from employers and/or colleagues; copies of proposals; peer feedback; oral/written exams; performance evaluation; self evaluation paper; or expository papers, among others.

The PLAR for any course must be completed within the semester that the course is offered.[15]

At Malaspina the advisors and assessors are the same individual. This practice was chosen to streamline the process and recognize the expertise each faculty member has in a course area. It also ensures that the student does not get caught between the different expectations of an advisor and assessor, and allows the assessor to work one-on-one with the students.

Malaspina reports that students who have experienced the PLAR process appreciate the increased access, savings in time and money, and the increased self-esteem that results from having their skills validated.

### 3.4.5 University of Alberta, Alberta

The University of Alberta (U of A) utilizes what they call "Credit by Special Assessment" to recognize and award credit for prior learning. In the Faculty of Nursing Department, prior learning situations only tend to arise from the Post-RN stream. Courses in the Post-RN program that are available for challenge include two third-year classes (NURS 315, NURS 368) and two fourth-year courses (NURS 409 and NURS 490).

The Faculty of Nursing primarily uses a challenge process that includes strategies to assess knowledge, comprehension, application, critical thinking, and writing. The assessment must include a written examination or assignments and examples of scholarly writing, one of which must be conducted 'in person' at the Faculty of Nursing.

The challenges are held during two time periods: the week prior to the Fall Term and prior to the start of Spring Term. In the event of being unsuccessful in the challenge, the student must register and take the course in the upcoming term.

### 3.4.6 Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Saskatchewan

With funding assistance from the Saskatchewan Learning Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Enhancement Funding Initiative, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) undertook a PLAR pilot project in 2001. Historically, many students came to SIIT's Home Health Aide/Long Term Care Aide Program (HHA/LTCA) with extensive previous work experience. SIIT developed an assessment tool to determine the need for PLAR and the degree of PLAR readiness in the SIIT Home Health Aide/Long Term Care Aide Program (HHA/LTCA). The assessment tool was designed based on the learning outcomes of the 20 modules that comprised the HHA/LTCA program. For the development of the assessment tool, the learning outcomes from the 20 courses were transferred to a checklist format. Fifty-four former SIIT learners were contacted by SIIT instructor of the HHA/LTCA and interviewed to determine whether they felt they could challenge the course intents and document their learning.

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[15] http://web.mala.bc.ca/bnpfaculty/BSN%20program/PLA/prior_learning_assessment.htm

The results of the interviews revealed that although many of the learners came to the program with experience, they did not feel they could challenge as many courses as they initially thought they could. Less than ten percent of learners interviewed felt that they could challenge select courses and, of these learners, the majority felt they could only successfully challenge portions of the courses rather than an entire course. For example, one learner had previous experience in a health-related program and felt that he/she could challenge parts of several modules, but not complete modules. Another learner, with health-related and life skills academic experience, felt he/she could challenge at least six of the twenty modules. A course on Home Management was more commonly identified as a course that could be challenged in whole or in part, however no courses were PLAR-ready without some work. Learners who felt they could challenge courses, or parts of courses, indicated they could demonstrate their prior learning through exams (or transcripts), and demonstrate their skills through a skill demonstration in person or via video[16].

### 3.4.7 Red River College Nursing Program, Manitoba

The Red River College (RRC) was the first post-secondary institution in Canada to offer PLAR in its nursing program. However, their PLAR practices have altered since the 1980's, reflecting the institution's response to changing education models in nursing, the industry's immediate need for qualified nurses, and public policies that have been implemented to address this need. RRC currently operates a Joint Baccalaureate Nursing program offered in partnership with the University of Manitoba, and a Diploma Nursing Accelerated Program.

At present, RRC utilizes a form of PLAR to grant advanced standing to the long list of Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) graduates waiting to come into RRC's Diploma Nursing Accelerated Program. Once seats become available due to student attrition, those LPNs that successfully complete the assessment process can receive advanced standing in the program, and take up these seats.

In the 2002 fall session, the diploma program received 15 completed portfolios, and another 50 applicants completed the application requirements and are waiting for a seat into the program.

The portfolio must include a synopsis of what experience the applicant has, where they have worked, two letters of reference, and comments from their supervisors on their ability to complete various practical nursing activities. The fee for portfolio assessment is $25.

Students can come into the course in September each year (regular-full program), January each year, or May of each year. Typically, the LPNs apply to come in at May of each year and receive credit for the block of eight courses taken between September and May, including: Anatomy, Physiology, Psychology, Growth & Development, Introduction to Nursing, Health Assessment, and depending on their experience, a Nursing Skills First Course and Clinical First Course.

RRC would like to implement a PLAR process that recognizes other forms of learning, however, there are not enough resources to do so. As it is, the PLAR coordinator for Nursing spends two days a week, in addition to her class instruction duties, to ensure the LPN students are accepted into the program.

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[16] Saskatchewan Learning Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Enhancement Funding Initiative. A Progress Report". Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board. March 2002. pp. 21

### 3.4.8 Laurentian Univeristy School of Nursing, Ontario

The Laurentian Univeristy School of Nursing utilizes PLAR to either grant advanced standing in a program or to grant credit for a course. A contact with Laurentian's School of Nursing estimates that there has been no more than 10 to 15 PLAR requests each year. However, as they are getting more students entering the program with other degrees, PLAR activities are becoming more common. They now have a variety of students participating in PLAR – students in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.Sc.N.), including Registered Nurses in a revised B.Sc.N. Program for RNs, Nurse Practitioner students, and now Masters students.

The School of Nursing has created its own policies and procedures; however, they are not publicly available on the Internet at present. A student wishing to PLAR a course is provided with the course syllabus, objectives, and assignments. They are required to produce a portfolio demonstrating that they have met the course intents/or course objectives and produce assignments equivalent to those in the course. Laurentian also utilizes challenge exams in their PLAR process. Any course in the program can be challenged for credit through PLAR.

The fee for students to challenge the course is $80.00 per course, which is a set fee determined by the department. These monies go directly to the course professor assessing the portfolio. At this time, the School of Nursing does not receive any additional funding to cover other expenses related to providing PLAR services.

### 3.4.9 University of Ottawa, Ontario

The University of Ottawa recently implemented a PLAR process for undergraduate courses in May of 2002. In the fall/winter semester of 2002, the University processed five PLAR requests in the Nursing Program. To have prior learning recognized, the applicant must first be admitted to and registered in the program. Two non-refundable administrative fees are payable to the University. The first is a fee of $25 to have the applicant's eligibility examined, and the second is $250 for the assessment itself if the applicant is deemed eligible.

The faculty for the course being challenged is responsible for evaluating the request. Learning is assessed by means of a portfolio submitted by the student, which should provide evidence that learning is relevant, current, at the appropriate level, and contains a balance of theory and practice, which is detailed and verified. As portfolio assessment is a new process for all involved, the faculty found they had to ask three of the five applicants to re-submit their portfolios with further evidence because the initial documentation did not provide sufficient evidence of their learning. The student's were not charged for their first portfolio submissions, and their portfolios were returned much improved.

### 3.4.10 Mohawk College, Ontario

Mohawk College assumed a leadership role in the implementation of PLAR in the Ontario College system, and was the first college in the province to develop an experiential learning policy in the early 1980's. PLAR was primarily used in Mohawk's Diploma Nursing Program as a method of recognizing and awarding credit to registered practical nurses who wished to become registered nurses, and were requesting enrolment into the second year of the diploma program. At the time, the nursing program had the highest number of PLAR requests at Mohawk College.

As of September 2002, responding to the new entry to practice requirement that all new Ontario Nurses must have a baccalaureate degree in Nursing starting in 2005, Mohawk College began providing a joint nursing baccalaureate program in collaboration with McMaster University. McMaster University does not currently have a use for PLAR. Those diploma registered nurses who want to obtain a degree can enter into McMaster's Post-Registered Nurses program.

With the eventual phase out of diploma nurses in Ontario by 2005, the use of PLAR to 'bridge' registered practical nurses into Mohawk's nursing program is becoming increasingly limited. However, Mohawk still receives approximately 12 PLAR requests each year from registered practical nurses who are trying to catch the tail end of the old diploma program, and wish to receive advanced standing into the 2nd or 3rd year of the program.

Portfolios are used by Mohawk College as a method of preliminary self-assessment by registered practical nurse students interested in gaining admittance into the Nursing Diploma Program. In order to participate in the portfolio assessment, registered practical nurses are required to enroll in Mohawk's portfolio development course, for which they will receive credit if they successfully complete it. The fees for this course are equal to a normal course fee of $180.00.

Mohawk's Nursing Program would like the students to fully understand their strengths, knowledge, and skill sets before they complete the additional assessments required to receive credit (advanced standing) for the first, and potentially, second year courses in the diploma program. Once the portfolio has been successfully completed, students may also participate in a challenge process that may include written exams or assignments, interviews, or simulations/demonstrations.

The fees for other types of assessment is set at a flat rate of $90, equal to one half of the cost of a normal course fee. Students may receive a refund on their assessment fee if they submit a written request no later than three working days prior to the scheduled assessment date. The fees are non-refundable after this time.

The Nursing Program offers students the opportunity to undergo a three-day clinical demonstration, which occurs at a local hospital, for the practical courses being challenged. This option is more expensive for the students, with a fee of $400.00.

If the registered practical nurses successfully complete the assessment process, they receive conditional acceptance into the diploma program, based on the availability of a seat. Applicants are never turned away if they have successfully completed the assessment; however, depending on seat availability, they may have a longer waiting period in some cases.

Space is definitely an issue, as Mohawk's Nursing Program has a huge retention rate. The number of nursing students Mohawk accepts is based on the number of clinical placements spots available.

In the Nursing Advisor's opinion, a PLAR policy that allows students to undergo assessments only after they have been admitted to the program will create problems related to the funding of seats and the student's placement within the program. The college is funded for a specific number of full-time equivalent (FTE) seats, for which they receive maximum funding. A student that successfully completes a PLAR assessment after being admitted will potentially change status from a FTE to a part-time equivalent (PTE). The institution will lose funding dollars, the student will no longer belong to the same group of peers, and there may be problems assigning the student a seat in a different level of the program. By completing the assessments before the student is admitted to the program, the student is able to enter into the program at the appropriate level, without juggling courses or seats, and finish the remainder of the program in the same cohort.

There is also an issue around use of PLAR in Mohawk's practical nursing program, which has now become a diploma program instead of a certificate program. This is the first year of operation for the new program, and the administrators felt they would wait to see how the program proceeded before assessing what courses should be offered through a PLAR process. However, the Nursing Advisor feels it may be difficult to use PLAR at all, given the significantly advanced level of competencies and knowledge students are required to have in the new practical nursing diploma program. Although other health-care workers (i.e., care aides) will come into the program with an understanding of the basic care concepts, they will not have the upper level assessment and critical thinking components that are now part of the course outcomes. In her experience, it is not viable to offer PLAR, when students only have prior learning that meets a tiny portion of this course and a little bit of another.

However, the overall PLAR Co-ordinator for Mohawk College feels that they have been more rigorous in their past assessment practices than required, and that the nursing program must look at more flexible policies and procedures for the future. For instance, one of the traditional policies at Mohawk is that if a student has completed an accredited program more than 3-5 years ago, each individual course must be challenged again (write exam for every course). The administrators and faculty need to consider more flexible assessment practices such as the gathering of 'field' data (letters of recommendations, reports from supervisors, interviews) that verify the learner can do and understand the theoretical and practical concepts of the course being challenged.

Mohawk currently receives minimal provincial government support for providing PLAR services, obtaining $30 for each assessment, which does not cover the costs of administering and providing PLAR services.

## 3.5 Potential Issues or Barriers to the Successful Implementation of PLAR

As the above 'case studies' have shown, there are some issues that have arisen in the course of trying to develop and implement PLAR processes in post-secondary programs. A review of literature has also revealed additional issues that must be considered by institutions who are in the process of developing their own PLAR processes or even those who need to revise their existing policies and procedures.

### 3.5.1 Lack of Demand

As some institutions have experienced, a lack of student demand for PLAR services can undermine an institution's efforts to implement such an initiative. There are a large number of factors that can negatively affect student's demand for PLAR services.

- Financial disincentives:
    - Non-refundable PLAR fees at rates close or equal to those charged for a regular course tuition.
    - Credits earned through PLAR can result in the reduction of the student's status to part-time and reduce amount of student assistance, or eliminate student eligibility from student loan programs completely.

- Considerable time commitment involved in the PLAR process.

- A comparable workload to regular attendance in the course (some students may prefer to take the course to ensure they are learning all the required theory and practice).

- Simosko and Debling note that "many PLA programs based in colleges and universities seem unduly complex. Learners are often expected to jump over unnecessary administrative hurdles." [17]

- Inadequate communication and a lack of developed guidelines and requirements can frustrate PLAR candidates, and often lead to wasted time and repetitious work.

- A lack of awareness and understanding on the student's behalf regarding the PLAR process and the potential benefits.

- An inability of the student to transfer PLAR credits to other post-secondary institutions due to non-standardized reporting of PLAR credit(s).

### 3.5.2 Inadequate Funding to Carry out PLAR Services

An inability to secure or generate enough funding to cover the costs of carrying out PLAR services is perhaps one of the biggest challenges faced by post-secondary institutions today. The development and implementation of a quality PLAR process requires a significant level of human and financial resources that are often over and above the day-to-day operating costs. The various expenses include the developmental work of translating the course outlines into PLAR guidelines, the training of assessors and portfolio instructors, the costs of internal administrative coordination, development of assessment tools, delivery of assessment services/remuneration of faculty, and other support services provided to PLAR candidates, among other costs.

As mentioned earlier, a full-cost recovery charge to students is simply not feasible. All post-secondary institutions charge a fee for PLAR assessment services, which is typically non-refundable. The fee structure varies with some institutions charging a set fee for specific assessment services (i.e., portfolio or challenge exams), while others may base the fee for assessment as a percent of the full course tuition fee (50%-100%) or on the number or credits being challenged. There is often a higher cost associated with portfolio or work-based assessments. Still, these revenues do not offset the costs of the above-mentioned activities.

Often institutions are provided with one-time seed funding from their provincial governments to initiate pilot projects in PLAR, but do not receive continued support once they have the beginnings of a system established. The national study of PLAR, titled "A Slice of the Iceberg: Cross-Canada Study of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition" noted that the public policy focus on PLAR diminished at some institutions over the five year period and resulted in a reduction of financial resources designated specifically for PLAR development.

It also observed that the low numbers of PLAR learners, and programs in which PLAR was accessed, are disturbing signals that delivery of assessments in its current form has not been economical for most institutions. The financial analysis indicates that several institutions were providing PLAR non-assessment services at a loss. They were also delivering assessments at a substantial loss relative to the delivery of traditional courses. There are no short-term financial benefits to institutions to provide PLAR if revenues are considerably less than revenues from traditional program delivery.[18]

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[17] Barker, Kathryn, Dr. Sustainability and Efficiency of Prior Learning Assessment in British Columbia's Public Post-Secondary Education System. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer, and Technology. Victoria. 2001. pp 7.

Like students, institutions also face financial disincentives to offer PLAR services. Successful PLAR assessments result in the reduction of the number of courses a student is required to take and potentially may reduce their educational status from a full-time equivalent (FTE) to a part-time equivalent. This loss of FTE seats negatively affects the operating grants of some institutions.

A sample of comments from a survey on PLAR practices conducted with post-secondary institutions in British Columbia illustrates that inadequate funding is a common problem.

"Provision of adequate and continued provincial funding, without which my institution has difficulty maintaining, expanding, and enhancing existing PLA."[19]

"Although my institution supported the PLA initiative, budget restrictions within the institution resulted in no longer being able to offer seed funding to develop and implement pilot innovative educational strategies."

"My institution supports all aspects of the BC PLA Initiative; however, is unable to allocate additional resources from an under-funded operational budget."

### 3.5.3 Reimbursement for Faculty Time

The nursing schools that belong to the Collaborative Nursing Program in British Columbia (CNP) provide a good example of the problems that have arisen across Canada regarding faculty remuneration for PLAR assessment services. The first issue involves the lack of consistent or inclusive policies/letters of understanding regarding faculty remuneration for providing PLAR services. At present, the CNP partner institutions follow varied practices for reimbursement of faculty. For example, nursing faculty at Malaspina University College receive $250 for each 3 credit PLAR assignment, as per a letter of agreement. Likewise, the Okanagan University College has a letter of understanding which bases remuneration on the number of assigned real hours required to do PLAR. The rate of payment is determined by a formula. At the University College of the Cariboo, faculty receive 50% of the course fee, however, PLAR policy is not included in the faculty agreement. Others, like Camonsun College or North Island College, have not yet developed remuneration agreements for faculty, and the faculty have taken the activities up as part of their workload.[20]

The second related issue concerns the lack of adequate funding received by Nursing Programs from their institutions based on the PLAR fees collected from learners. The amount received from the institution does not sufficiently offset the actual faculty time and costs involved in advising and assessment.

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[18] Aarts, S., Blower, D., Burke R., et al. A Slice of the Iceberg: Cross-Canada Study of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. (http://www.eciad.bc.ca/pla/iceberg.html)

[19] Prior Learning Assessment Practices in British Columbia. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer & Technology. Victoria. 2001. pp 17.

[20] http://www.cnpbc.org/PLA.

As the fees generated for PLAR do not adequately match the resources provided by the faculty, they are beginning to refuse to continue providing assessment services "off the side of their desks". Faculty would like to be adequately reimbursed for providing PLAR services or they will no longer provide them.[21]

### 3.5.4 Lack of Time to Carry Out PLAR Services

Closely related to the issue of faculty remuneration for PLAR assessment services is the shortage of faculty with available time to dedicate toward PLAR. Often the assessment activities are placed on top of already overloaded work schedules.

In addition, faculty requirements are often not accurately estimated, and they find themselves overloaded with PLAR activities.[22] It is difficult to accurately assign PLAR responsibilities to faculty members if the number of students that will be requesting PLAR services is an unknown variable.

Faculty workload and incentives is a critical issue that many institutions have found if not addressed leads to a decrease in PLAR activity even though learners may be demanding these services. The time consuming nature of PLA at times is a barrier to faculty enthusiasm when added to their normal level of work.[23]

In addition, several PLAR coordinators indicated that the PLAR initiatives in their institutions could not have been established if it had not been for the dedication of resources to hire a project champion who would be in charge of coordinating the efforts of development and implementation.

### 3.5.5 Resistance to Change: Shifting Focus from Traditional Full-time Programs

The roles and responsibilities of an instructor or teacher are philosophically different than those of an advisor or assessor. Rather than instructing and teaching PLAR candidates, faculty find themselves facilitating the assessment process, and utilizing new and unfamiliar methods of flexible assessment, so that the students may demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

A common concern is that the quality of learning will suffer if PLAR activities are allowed to replace the traditional classroom experience. Nursing Programs want to ensure that all nurse graduates demonstrate a high level of skills and knowledge once they are in the workplace.

Camosun provides an example of how a PLAR process can support the same level of learning as that obtained through traditional program delivery. When PLAR was implemented at Camosun College, BC, with its Home Support Attendant program, faculty/assessors were initially concerned with their ability to determine whether or not course outcomes had been met through flexible assessment methods such as portfolios. With time, faculty found they could determine success from the portfolios submitted, many of which were exceptional.

Offering PLAR opportunities involved letting go of the belief that all learning has to be within the program. It challenged faculty to think about other ways that learning can be demonstrated.

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[21] http://www.cnpbc.org/PLA/issues.html.

[22] http://www.cnpbc.org/PLA/issues.html.

[23] Prior Learning Assessment Practices in British Columbia. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer & Technology. Victoria. 2001. pp 29.

The first time PLAR was offered, assessors felt the candidates had to prove everything. With increasing experience, assessors had more confidence in the process and themselves. The assessment time was shortened and candidates were not expected to display more than what is expected of students in the actual course.[24]

However, the following comments from faculty at health and human service-based post-secondary institutions indicate that many institutions still operate under traditional educational models, and that a conscious effort would have to be made to include other flexible forms of learning and assessment.[25]

"Focus is on traditional, full-time students and programs that are in high demand."

"My institution continues to struggle with being flexible and responsive to learning assessment needs of learners, especially outside of traditional credit courses".

### 3.5.6 Availability of Seats

As mentioned earlier, implementing PLAR will have an impact on the number of full-time seats available in any given year, and may create a dilemma for faculty in ensuring placement of students within the NEPS. If a student successfully receives PLAR credit for a course(s), there may not be a seat available for them in an upper year or they may leave a seat empty in a particular cohort.

## 3.6 Best Practices for the Sustainable Development of PLAR

There are several best practices that can be garnered from the review of literature and interviews with PLAR coordinators from Nursing Programs across Canada. The following are some of the key practices post-secondary institutions should consider when implementing or revising a PLAR process.

- ➢ Appoint a project champion (i.e., PLAR Coordinator) who can focus efforts on developing the resources and networks, policies, and procedures necessary to implement PLAR in a program or institution.
- ➢ Secure the resources to support the individual in PLAR developmental activities; i.e., orientations or training sessions for faculty, assessment tool development, promotional materials (paper, websites, etc.), administration and reporting activities, and so on.
- ➢ Conduct faculty orientation and consultation sessions to achieve a greater commitment to, understanding of, and skills in PLAR implementation.
- ➢ Provide PLAR candidates with detailed guidelines regarding the course outcomes to be demonstrated, that are specific and measurable where possible, as well as the overall requirements of the assessment to be undertaken.
    - ○ Prepare PLAR course blueprints that describe courses in terms of intended course outcomes, and the criteria for specific skills and knowledge to be demonstrated.

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[24] Ferguson, Faye. Prior Learning Assessment in Health and Human Service Programs in British Columbia. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer, and Technology. Victoria. March 1998. pp. 15.

[25] Prior Learning Assessment Practices in British Columbia. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer & Technology. Victoria. 2001. pp. 29.

- Provide adequate orientation to the student regarding the assessment process
- Offer alternative flexible methods of assessment, such as portfolios, skill demonstrations or workplace assessments, to meet the needs of PLAR candidates and facilitate their efforts to provide and demonstrate various types of evidence for what they know and can do.
- Consider modularizing courses to assist in facilitating 'top-up' training required when a PLAR candidate meets the course intents for the majority of the course, and to avoid duplication of learning already taken.
- Streamline assessment process and minimize time, cost, and paperwork for PLAR candidates.
- Develop informational and promotional materials for students and faculty directed at the education and awareness of the PLAR process, policies, and procedures.
- Develop a website dedicated to the PLAR initiative to facilitate more effective dissemination of PLAR project materials to faculty and students (improved accessibility and long-term cost-savings).
    - Students could use the site for orientation to understand PLAR and self-assessment to determine their readiness and next steps. This tool would not replace the need for students to meet face-to-face with a PLAR coordinator/advisor, but would minimize the amount of human resources required to educate and inform the students interested in PLAR. Similarly, faculty could use such a sight for ongoing orientation or reference to existing best practices and policies, challenges and issues.
- Offer a portfolio development course to assist students in understanding the PLAR assessment process and provide guidance and feedback in preparing their documentation for assessment. Preparing a portfolio requires skills that many candidates have not previously practiced – recall, reflection, analysis, translation, and association[26].
- Address options for faculty remuneration and workload issues.
- Have faculty step into advising roles for PLAR in lieu of practicum supervision.
- Ensure that written policies and procedures are implemented and practiced by all program administrators and faculty.
- Rationalize the costs of PLAR to reflect the services provided.
- Determine actual costs for the development and delivery of advising and assessment services for each course offered through PLAR.
- Lobby public policy makers to:
    - Create a supportive public policy that funds institutions and faculty to provide PLAR services.
    - Support PLAR and initiatives that promote PLAR research, assessment, and assessor training to the same degree that traditional delivery is supported.

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[26] Ferguson, Faye. Prior Learning Assessment in Health and Human Service Programs in British Columbia. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer, and Technology. Victoria. March 1998. pp. 25.

- Undertake a review to revise current public policy and role of government in supporting PLAR in post-secondary institutions (for example, allowing Registered Educational Savings Plan funds to be accessed for post-secondary PLAR, and permitting PLAR learners to retain their eligibility for student assistance).[27]

## 4 REPORT ON FINDINGS OF STUDENT SURVEY

The following section provides a brief overview of the findings from the student survey. The full report can be found in Appendix One.

### 4.1 Objectives of the NEPS Student Survey

The second stage of research in the NEPS-PLAR Needs Assessment consisted of conducting a survey of all first-to-third year NEPS students. Student involvement in the study was an important component of the project. Their participation allowed the NEPS to assess how many students, once admitted to the NEPS, perceive they have a significant level of relevant prior learning to merit developing a PLAR process, and to identify the proportion of students that would be interested in utilizing PLAR to facilitate a faster progression through the program.

### 4.2 Highlights of the Student Survey Findings

The student survey was held during the week of January 20th, 2003. Two hundred and seventy one students out of a total of approximately 763 first-to-third year NEPS students participated (a 35% response rate). This sample size provides a fair representation of the responses of the whole group of NEPS students within + or - 5%, 19 times out of 20 (95% confidence level).

There was an even distribution of students among the first-to-third year cohorts, with each respective year representing approximately one-third of the total sample. Similarly, there was a comparative distribution of participants from the Regina (56%) and Saskatoon (44%) NEPS campuses. The respondents were predominantly women, many of who were between 18 to 23 years of age.

Although students 18 to 23 years of age make up the largest proportion of respondents, it is the more mature students 24 years of age and older who feel they have prior learning that meets the majority or all of the NEPS course intents.

The majority of students indicated they have some university education. This group, along with those students who have a college diploma/certificate, most often indicated they have prior learning that meets the majority or all of the NEPS course intents.

The majority of students (56%) have some previous work experience in the health-care industry. Of those students with work experience, the majority have worked in the health-care system for 1 to 4 years. Home Care/Special Care Aides make up the largest group of NEPS students who have work experience in the health care system.

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[27] Barker, Kathryn, Dr. Sustainability and Efficiency of Prior Learning Assessment in British Columbia's Public Post-Secondary Education System. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer, and Technology. Victoria. 2001. pp. 15.

The NEPS courses in which at least 4% or more of students indicated they have received a transfer of credit for the course include:

- NURS 111 – Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body
- NURS 112 – Development of Self
- NURS 114 – Interpersonal Relationships
- NURS 115 – Core Concepts of Care
- NURS 212 – Microbiology for Health Sciences
- NURS 216 – Healthy Growth and Development
- NURS 233 – Practicum I
- NURS 419 – Research for Professional Practice

The majority of students with employment experience that received transfer of credit for NEPS courses are Licensed Practical Nurses and Home Care/Special Care Aides, who had taken university courses. Likewise the majority of students who felt they had significant prior learning for NEPS courses are Home Care/Special Care Aides and Licensed Practical Nurses.

The courses that have the largest proportion of students who feel they have prior learning that meets the majority or all of the learning intents include the following; many of which are human skills based:

- NURS 111 – Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body
- NURS 112 – Development of Self
- NURS 114 – Interpersonal Relationships
- NURS 211 – Counseling in Nursing Practice
- NURS 216 – Healthy Growth and Development
- NURS 218 – Education for Health
- NURS 317 – Family Diversity
- NURS 327 – Participating with Groups

The majority of students who indicated they have prior learning felt their prior learning is relatively recent, and has been obtained within the last five years. Three of the classes have 85% or more of the students stating their prior learning is recent. These include NURS 111.6 Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body, NURS 233.6 Practicum I, and NURS 302.3 Health Challenges Theory. Only one-third of the classes (9 of 26) have less than three-quarters of the students (66%-74%) indicating their prior learning is recent.

Similarly, the majority of students who feel they have prior learning stated they could provide evidence of this learning. Those courses that have approximately 85% or more of the students stating they could provide evidence include: NURS 215.3 Health Challenges for Adults, NURS 217.6 Individual Assessment, NURS 303.3 Health Challenges IV: Clinical, NURS 317.3 Family Diversity, and NURS 419.3 Research for Professional Practice. Again, only one-third of the classes (9 of 26) have less than three-quarters of the students (54%-74%) indicating they could provide evidence of their prior learning. The lowest percentage of learners with the ability to provide evidence (54%) occurred in NURS 327.3 Participating with Groups.

The most common methods by which students stated they have obtained their prior learning are formal post-secondary education, followed by work experience. Those classes with a significantly large proportion of students (90% - 94%) indicating their prior learning has been acquired through education included NURS 300.3 Health Challenges of Adults III: Theory, and

NURS 419.3 Research for Professional Practice. NURS 115.3 Core Concepts of Care and NURS 217 Individual Assessment had the largest proportion of students who have obtained their prior learning through work experience (approximately 85%).

Although employment experience is an important indicator of prior learning, a lack of employment experience in the health care industry by respondents did not rule out the existence of perceived relevant prior learning that could meet the majority or all of the learning intents. This is especially true for the human skills courses, NURS 112.3 Development of Self, NURS 114.3 Interpersonal Relationships, and NURS 211 Counseling Nursing Practice. Those individuals with no related work experience comprised the largest proportion of students who indicated they could meet some level of these course intents.

However, in general, the respondents with 1-4 years work experience were most often the largest cohort to indicate they could meet the majority or all of the learning intents.

Approximately three quarters of the students who participated in the survey have a positive opinion about PLAR and indicated they would be interested in utilizing such a process if it were offered by the NEPS.

## 5 FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

The following section provides the results of the focus group session held with NEPS students, as a follow-on research activity to the student survey.

### 5.1 Objectives of NEPS Student Focus Group

In review of the preliminary results of the student survey the project managers determined, in consultation with the Steering Committee, that it would be beneficial to hold a focus group session with NEPS students to further explore select issues regarding the students' prior learning and the potential of utilizing a PLAR process in the NEPS.

Of particular interest were the experiences and opinions of those occupational groups identified in the survey as being larger cohorts of students who felt they had significant prior learning experience. This included Home Care/Special Care Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Emergency Medical Technicians. Notably, Home Care/Special Care Aides were the largest reported occupation by those students who completed the survey. However, since the majority of these students had no accredited training for this occupation, the project managers for the needs assessment were interested to learn more about the students' work experiences and how they related to the course intents in the NEPS. The Licensed Practical Nurses and Emergency Medical Technicians had both previous academic training and employment experience that could be applied to courses in the NEPS.

### 5.2 Findings of Focus Group Discussion

The following findings are a summary of the responses and recommendations received from NEPS students at the focus group session held in Saskatoon on March 10th, 2003. There were seven participants present: two Licensed Practical Nurses with work experience, and five Home Care/Special Care Aides with varying degrees of work experience. In order to obtain a minimum of eight opinions, the findings also include feedback received from a NEPS student based in Regina, who has experience as an EMT. A one-on-one telephone interview was held with the student, and followed the same format as the focus group sessions.

**Note**: The students who provided the following opinions have only been provided with a cursory overview of PLAR, and may not have a full appreciation for the level of knowledge that is required to meet the NEPS learning outcomes (learning outcomes are a more specific measure of the required theoretical and practical knowledge than the course intents, which are currently published). In addition, they may not be aware of all of the curriculum review initiatives that are currently underway in the NEPS.

### 5.2.1 Inventory of Prior Learning

Students were given the opportunity to reflect on the specific prior learning they had obtained through work and other experiences that related to the course intents in the NEPS, and why they felt this learning could or could not meet the intents of the NEPS.

The following lists are comprised of the knowledge and skills the students reported they had obtained through prior learning experiences. They feel many of these skills directly meet the clinical portions of the first two years of the NEPS. This is discussed more in the following section.

*Home Care/Special Care Aides or Resident Care Attendants:*

- Part of multi-disciplinary team (5 students)
- Visiting/counseling/caring for clients as holistic beings (5 students)
- ADL Assistance (bathing, oral hygiene, grooming) (5 students)
- Transfers, Lifts, Repositioning (TLR) (3 students)
- 2 - Professional Assault Response Training (PART) (2 students)
- Assisted with medication administration (3 students)
- Use of mechanical lifts (3 students)
- Rehabilitation/exercises (2 students)
- Experience with aphasia, swallowing difficulties (2 students)
- Therapeutic communication/interpersonal skills
- Assisted with wound care: changed dressings/stitches
- Infection control seminars
- Feeding program certification
- Athletic Trainer's Advanced Certification – assessment of muscle, joint, ligament, and tendon injury
- Head to toe skin assessment
- Range of Motion
- Assisted in client assessment,
- Charting
- Experience taking vital signs
- Palliative care experience (with death, counseling of family)
- Fall risk assessment
- Part-time teaching and education – rehabilitation and ADLs

*Licensed Practical Nurses:*

- Basic care and ADL assistance (bathing, oral hygiene, grooming) (5 students)
- Medication/Drug Therapy (conducting assessment, administering medications)
  - Should not have to take pharmacology; have had to train newly graduated/licensed registered nurses on how to administer medication.
- Acute care, long-term, home care, and/or palliative care experience
- Counseling Nursing practice – with all stages of therapeutic relationship
- Dealing with death on a ongoing basis
- Microbiology
  - Wound care, sterilization techniques, catheterization
  - Understand diseases and disease processes, knowledgeable of organisms
- Vital signs
- Head-to-toe physical assessment
- Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) Foot care training
- Managed 50 bed long term care with RN on call – on nights (12 hr) and weekends
- Counseling and education of clients
- Professionalism and principles of healthcare
- Working in a hospital with a multi-disciplinary client centered health team
- Interpersonal communication, development of self – learned to be effective team member
- Health and healing
- Prevention
- Nutrition

*Emergency Medical Technician:*

- Worked collaboratively and very closely with nurses and doctors in rural community; who also learned from the experiences of the EMT, and vice versa.
- Often assisted with emergency medical care, as nurses were over-extended - lack of manpower
- Performed basic operating room procedures (i.e., assisted with administering local or general anesthetic)
- Performed intramuscular, subcutaneous, and intraveneous injections (advanced training for rural EMT's)
- Administered nine medications (advanced training for rural EMT's)
- Worked closely with public health and community to implement child car seat safety client (safety education and advocacy)
- Worked closely with SGI and community to implement a bike helmet safety program (safety education and advocacy)

*Other:*

One student reported experience as a camp counselor for children with disabilities. The knowledge and skills gained from this experience included administering medications, providing ADL assistance, performing TLR and tube feeds; as well as developing the caring and interpersonal skills required to work with children with Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder, Rubenstein-Taybi, and many other difficulties.

A second student report additional experience as a psychiatric attendant; therapeutic counseling of psychiatric patients (sometimes 12-16 hour days spent with clients – "suicide watch"); first

Aid-CPR facilitator and first responder instruction; and co-chair on board of rehabilitation program for coronary surgery patients – worked closely with a team of RN's, pharmacists, doctors, and nutritionists.

### 5.2.2 Relating Existing Courses with Student's PLAR

The following section relates the PLAR experiences students shared at the outset of the session to their comments made about the appropriateness of applying PLAR to specific courses in the NEPS.

Students were provided with a list of classes from each year in the NEPS. The classes selected were those that had the largest proportion of students surveyed indicating they met the majority of all of the course intents. The students were then asked to consider this list, and comment on which classes they felt should be initially provided if the NEPS were to offer PLAR services in the future. They were invited to add or remove courses to the list as they saw fit, keeping in mind implementing PLAR is a costly and time-consuming process and there may only be enough resources to offer a few classes at the outset.

The courses on the list included:

i. NURS 111.6 – Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body.
ii. NURS 112.3 – Development of Self
iii. NURS 114.3 – Interpersonal Relationships
iv. NURS 211.3 – Counseling in Nursing Practice
v. NURS 216.3 – Healthy Growth and Development
vi. NURS 218.3 – Education for Health
vii. NURS 317.3 – Family Diversity
viii. NURS 327.3 – Participating with Groups

In general, the students agreed the courses listed were appropriate courses for introducing PLAR into the NEPS. There were a few changes to the list that included removing NURS 111.6, and adding NURS 115.3 Core Concepts of Care. There was definitely an overall focus on classes in the first and second years of the NEPS. No one indicated that the third year or fourth year courses were appropriate for PLAR, and two students did not feel that their peers would have enough prior knowledge to successfully PLAR NURS 317.3.

One student suggested that, if budget restrictions were an issue, administrators might want to initially offer PLAR for those classes that have concrete, well-defined course intents that are clearly demonstrable, such as NURS 111.6, NURS 115.3, or NURS 212.3. Human skills classes such as NURS 112.3 or NURS 114.3 are more subjective and may take more time to assess whether the student has the appropriate level of knowledge and skill. These types of courses could be brought on stream once the process was in place and more resources were available.

The students' feedback provided specific insight into the following NEPS courses, with respect to the students' ability to utilize their prior learning to meet the course intents.

*NURS 111.6 Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body*

Although the survey indicated there is a higher proportion of students who feel they could meet the majority or all of the learning intents for NURS 111.6 relative to other classes, the majority of the focus group participants (6 out of 8) felt this class was too in-depth to be offered for PLAR.

In fact, many of the students felt that additional time should be dedicated to NURS 111.6, perhaps even expanding it to a "9-credit course". They also noted its importance as a referral tool for higher-level courses in the NEPS.

One student mentioned that, at the time the student survey was completed, he/she felt the course could be challenged utilizing prior learning from previous academic and work experience. However, this student now realizes the content being covered in the second semester is more in-depth and he/she is definitely benefiting from being in the class and the lab.

*NURS 112.3 Development of Self & NURS 114.3 Interpersonal Relationships*

Those students who have previous work or volunteer experiences, or related academic training do not feel that NURS 112 or NURS 114 have contributed any added value to their nursing education. For instance, working in the health-care system has already enabled students to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team, they have had to develop effective interpersonal and communication skills to interact with co-workers, peers, and clients, and they have developed and applied concepts of holistic caring for themselves and their clients.

In addition, some students had other experiences that enriched their knowledge and skills sets pertaining to these courses. For example, one student had previously spent one year on a mission internship traveling overseas and across the continent participating in ministry and teaching. This student experienced intense personal growth and stated it was a "stretching experience that forces you to look at who you are, and you spend all day, every day with a team of eight other people for eleven months, and so you learn a lot about building interpersonal relationships and using effective communication techniques."

The students did not feel they gained any new learning in taking these courses. In fact, the students were unanimous in recommending that NURS 112 and NURS 114 should be combined into one 3-credit class. Another common suggestion was to shorten these courses into a weekend seminar. **Note**: the option of combining NURS 112 and NURS 114 was thoroughly reviewed by the NEPS Curriculum Committee, and will not be considered as a course of action.

*NURS 113.3 Nursing: An Evolving Profession*

Although more of a curriculum-based issue, it should be mentioned that three of the eight students also felt that NURS 113 received too much emphasis as they did not feel it contributed greatly to their education, relative to some of the other nursing courses.

*NURS 115.3 – Core Concepts of Care*

Nearly all of the students made the recommendation that NURS 115.3 should be added to the initial list of courses that would be readied for PLAR first. They agreed that students with previous experience working in the health-care system working (i.e., LPNs, HC/SCA's, EMT's, etc.) were already competent regarding the basic concepts of care. One student mentioned that it was a precise class with a very specific skill set that could be easily demonstrated.

*NURS 211.3 – Counseling in Nursing Practice*

Many students reported that they have a lot of experience counseling clients as they regularly interact with them through work or volunteer activities. This is especially the case working in a variety of settings such as acute, long-term, palliative, psychiatric, or even home care, where clients and their families are dealing with issues regarding their mental, emotional, and physical well-being, medical procedures, drug therapy, or others.

*NURS 218.3 – Education for Health*

Several of the students felt they already have the knowledge and skills required to be a competent educator.

The student who has experience in ministry and teaching indicated that there was nothing in the course to date that he/she had not learned or done previously. The student added that he/she had also taken a teaching course through a non-accredited Bible School, which also contributed to his/her knowledge.

Another student worked as a teacher's assistant for two years, and taught children with fetal alcohol syndrome and attention deficit disorder, as well as adults with learning disabilities, or psychological problems (rage).

A third student has provided part-time teaching and education services to peers and clients around rehabilitation and ADL assistance.

Two more students gained valuable knowledge and skills from their roles as camp counselors with mentally and physically challenged children. They did a lot of teaching and advocating for these children and their parents.

A sixth student has also gained lot of relevant learning and experience as a First Aid-CPR facilitator and first responder instructor.

### 5.2.3 Increased Recognition for Prior Learning

All of the students expressed a desire to minimize repetition and redundancy in their education. They do not see the value of spending their time or money re-taking theoretical or practical aspects of the NEPS that they already know and can do. They specifically reported some frustration with the clinical portions of classes in the first and second years of the program. This includes courses such as NURS 115.3 Core Concepts of Care, NURS 215.3 Health Challenges of Adults I; NURS 219.3 Health Challenges for Adults II; and NURS 233.6 Practicum I. The students felt that their prior experiences should be taken into consideration when assigning laboratory activities or making clinical placements. For instance, students who have experience working in long-term care facilities, as Home Care/Special Care Aides, will find themselves placed in the same type of facilities for their lab or clinical placements, 'practicing' the exact duties they already have learned and performed. Students feel that if they cannot receive credit for the clinical portions of the NEPS, they would at least obtain more benefit by practicing in a different environment or with more than one type of client, increasing the degree of challenge and learning that occurs. One student, who is currently working at a long-term care facility and believes he/she has a good understanding of holistic care principles, made the comment that the clinical was so repetitive that he/she could have been at work instead and at least received compensation for her time.

A couple of the more experienced students related that their instructors had expressed concern that the student's level of knowledge was already above what was being taught in the class or practiced in the labs, and that the student was receiving no benefit from taking the course.

It is important to note, that while the students felt that some clinical portions of the NEPS could be challenged, they acknowledged the importance and necessity of learning the theoretical components of these courses.

The students also raised the issue of other health-care programs or non-accredited courses that are currently not recognized for transfer of credit purposes into the NEPS. For instance, the student with academic and professional training and experience as an Emergency Medical Technician, and a psychiatric attendant, was not awarded a transfer of credit for any of the courses in the NEPS. Needless to say, this student feels there are some components of the NEPS he/she already knows and can do, and should be credited with.

The LPN students felt strongly that there were still other courses for which they already had the knowledge and skills for but had not received a transfer of credit (the majority of second year classes, excluding NURS 218.3 Education for Health, and NURS 216.3 Healthy Growth and Development). LPNs would welcome the opportunity to be able to demonstrate their learning and challenge some of the NEPS courses for credit. This was especially the case for one of the students who had received LPN training out of the province, and was not awarded the same transfers for credit as did peers in Saskatchewan.

The comment was made that in today's health care system a LPN has a "full scope" of practice in the hospital. They are completely responsible for the patients and need to communicate and work effectively with the registered nurses regarding patient needs (i.e., medication orders). LPNs are now administering all medications except intravenous push medications, and conducting head to toe assessments, among other duties traditionally performed by registered nurses.

The students recommended that a committee be formed of the appropriate post-secondary institutions (University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, other Western Canadian institutions) and professional associations (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association and Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, and other Western Canadian nursing associations) to review the similarities and differences between the Nursing Program curriculum and that of the Practical Nursing Program, and examine the current scope of practice of LPNs in the health-care system. They believe there are greater synergies between the two programs/occupations than are currently being recognized. They also felt this type of collaboration should be of greater interest given the need for graduating an increasing number of qualified health care providers for the province.

There was also discussion among the group regarding the availability of bridging programs for LPNs in other provinces that enable them to obtain their degree/diploma sooner.

**Note**: The NEPS is continuously engaged in reviews of other health-care programs, and is currently completing a review of the Practical Nursing Program at SIAST, which may result in an increase of the number of transfer of credit courses awarded to LPN learners. As well, the

NEPS Curriculum Committee is constantly reviewing the program and its courses. It is currently considering splitting the 6-credit courses into two 3-credit courses, thereby separating theory and clinical learning.

### 5.2.4 Benefits of PLAR

The students identified several potential benefits of PLAR, many of which are commonly espoused in other PLAR studies.

- Potential for financial savings or debt reduction.
- Speed the progression of students with prior learning through the NEPS, enabling them to graduate sooner and gain employment.
- Increase the number of nursing graduates/registered nurses to address the shortage of nurses in the province/country.
- Minimize students' stress of having to take a course for which they feel they have significant prior learning for but are unable to receive recognition through traditional credit granting channels.
- Reduce redundancy and repetition felt by students who must take courses for which they already have prior learning.
- Increase in the perceived value or benefit of the classes that are taken, and rationalization of corresponding tuition fees.
- Save time for students to complete other course areas where the course content is more challenging.
- Provide the opportunity for students to work while they are in school to help support themselves or to gain additional training in a health-related field.
- Increase self-esteem and motivation through recognition of the unique experiences, knowledge, skills, and abilities each student already possesses when they come into the NEPS.

### 5.2.5 Methods of Assessment

The students were asked to describe the method(s) of assessment they thought would be most suitable for demonstrating their prior learning to assessors. Their responses indicate that students feel a variety of flexible assessment methods could be utilized to demonstrate prior learning. Ultimately, the sense from the students is that they simply want to see a fair method of assessment put in place to supplement the traditional forms of credit granting that currently exist.

The most common recommendation by students was the use of a challenge exam, especially for those classes that were science-based (i.e., NURS 111.6, NURS 212.3). Similarly, one student suggested the final exam for the course could be taken without attending the classes/labs.

Several students felt the clinical courses could be adequately assessed by the use of skills demonstrations or work-based evaluations. One experienced student commented that he/she "would like an instructor experienced in a certain field to follow me around at work and see what I actually do."

A few of the students, who believe that past experiences should be valued, selected portfolios as a suitable method of assessment. Some of the portfolio content suggested by students included such things as professional letters of recommendation, which detail the knowledge and skills a student has demonstrated in his or her previous academic, work, or volunteer role(s), as well as certificates received from work-related seminars.

Some of the students suggested the use of interviews or oral exams to assist faculty in judging the competence of the learner.

For some of the more subjective classes, a couple of the students recommended the use of long answer or essay type assignments or exams to demonstrate a student's knowledge.

Additional suggestions included the use of 'top-up' assignments if instructors deem it necessary, and the development of a 'make-up module' that could be offered to PLAR candidates for one-half the cost of a regular class.

### 5.2.6 Level of Effort

Students were asked to comment on the length of time they would be willing to dedicate in order to gather and demonstrate evidence of prior learning. Referring back to the literature review, some of the students' expectations may not be realistic according to findings that indicate the needs assessments undertaken in other Nursing Programs are often time-consuming processes. However, efforts must be made to streamline PLAR assessments for the benefit of faculty and students. Those students who perceive it will be just as much effort to PLAR a course, as it would be to attend the course, would prefer to pay the full tuition to take the regular course and receive a high grade to improve their average.

Their responses are listed below:

- Five hours for the assessment activity, one to two days to gather references.
- A minimum of 4-6 hours a week to gather and demonstrate evidence of prior learning experience; the student would be willing to give more time to the process if required.
- 3-4 hours a day for one week.
- Approximately 10 to 20 hours for a 3-credit class.
- The length of time would depend on the course being challenged. A clinical course would require one week of work-based demonstration. A human skills course such as NURS 112.3 should only require preparation time for an interview.
- Approximately one week of preparation time, at 3 hours a day. The actual time to complete an exam, interview, and demonstration for instance would probably be one half of a day (4 hours).

- Willing to spend one week completing the assessment, but only if there was a high probability of receiving credit for the course challenged.

- The time would vary depending on the method of assessment; however, one to two weeks should be sufficient to study for a challenge exam, gather evidence, or complete an assignment.

### 5.2.7 Appropriate Fees or Charges for PLAR Services

The students also provided feedback concerning the level of fees they felt were appropriate to charge for PLAR services. The responses from the participants indicate that the cost to students for PLAR services will be one of the largest determinants of demand. At this time, students may not have an appreciation for the time and resource requirements that may realistically be required to PLAR a course on both the part of the student and the institution. Students feel that if the cost of undertaking a PLAR assessment is equivalent to the cost of attending the course, and/or there is a risk they will not receive credit for the course being challenged, they will not utilize PLAR services.

The responses ranged from no cost to less than one half the cost of regular course tuition.

- No charge, as the program is too expensive already.

- $100 per course, plus an application fee.

- Would pay a flat fee such as $200 to get full credit for a course – but $100-$150 would be more feasible.
  - However, it is inappropriate to charge a fee if credits are not awarded. In the early part of the process it should be fairly clear if student's prior learning is insufficient.

- Less than 50% of tuition fee per class.

- If a LPN already has paid for the training, the classes should only cost around one-quarter of the fee for regular students.

- Not sure, but obviously less than the course itself otherwise you may as well get what you can from the classes and go to the lectures.

- I think the fees should be minimal as possible, after all why would you go through the assessment if the cost were the same.

### 5.2.8 Potential Issues or barriers to the Implementation and Utilization of PLAR

To wrap up the session, the students were asked to identify any potential issues or barriers they felt may arise in the potential implementation and utilization of PLAR in the NEPS.

One of the students' biggest concerns was the risk involved in undertaking an assessment process that may require the student to give a substantial amount of time, human and financial resources, with no guarantee of being granted credit for the course at the outcome of the assessment process. Students suggested that the preliminary assessment process should be fairly comprehensive, with specific and well-defined criteria and guidelines, so that the assessor can tell the PLAR candidate with some degree of accuracy whether or not they will be successful challenging the course using PLAR.

Closely related to this issue, is a comment made by one of the students who felt that if credit was not awarded for 100% of the course, it would be better to attend the entire course, and receive the full benefit of faculty instruction and the course material.

Respondents felt inflexible or limited assessment activities would be viewed by the student body as a barrier to successfully utilizing PLAR. Rather, the NEPS should develop several different methods of flexible assessment.

One student commented that a lack of resources may impact the ability of the NEPS to conduct individualized assessments, which will be necessary given the diverse backgrounds of the students.

One student mentioned that the standards against which the PLAR assessor would judge the candidate's level of learning should be consistent with the level of learning that is expected of students attending the course. This would be to ensure that the PLAR process does not negatively impact the student's ability to maintain a comparable level of knowledge and skills, and subsequently affect the ability to interact with their peers in future classes.

Similarly, students raised the concern that those individuals who successfully received PLAR credit would no longer be part of their existing cohort, and may find themselves separated from their peers.

The level of proof the student may be required to demonstrate may be not feasible for some students. This again is related to developing flexible forms of assessment to compensate for instances where physical records or documents are not available.

Students suggested there could be a problem if the policies, procedures, and administrative processes put in place are too restrictive to effectively deliver benefits to the students through reduced costs, workload, time to obtain credit, and so on (too much red tape).

There was a concern by students of the degree of financial burden PLAR may have for students. This is particularly a problem for students whose academic careers are supported through student loans. Given current policies, PLAR fees are not considered eligible tuition costs for granting student loan support.

Students suggested that lost revenues to the institutions as a result of reduced registration for full-time courses by PLAR students, or the perceived lack of control over the quality of learning of PLAR candidates, may act as disincentives for the NEPS to continue supporting the initiative.

The students commented that regardless of whether graduates received their learning for a particular course via PLAR or by traditional means, there are professional requirements that will motivate the students to ensure an appropriate quality and level of learning has been acquired. Students are aware that there are certain standard core competencies/knowledge that must be demonstrated by nursing graduates, in order to become registered nurses, through the successful completion of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) examination in order to be licensed with the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association.

## 6 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

### Literature Review

The PLAR Needs Assessment was designed to provide the NEPS with an understanding of how PLAR may be used in a nursing program; to assess the level of perceived learning students with health care experience feel they bring to the NEPS; and to identify their level of interest in utilizing a PLAR process.

The findings of the literature review provided information regarding some best practices and critical issues regarding the utilization of PLAR in nursing programs, which can be used by the NEPS to examine the feasibility of establishing a PLAR process for the nursing baccalaureate program in Saskatchewan.

The results indicate that post-secondary institutions are in varying stages on a 'learning curve' with respect to developing and implementing successful a PLAR process. Some nursing programs are just developing PLAR processes. Others are finding it necessary to revise and improve upon their existing PLAR policies, procedures, and assessment methods, in order to balance the needs of learners and faculty/the institution, and to stimulate demand for PLAR from the student body. These institutions are now beginning to refine original PLAR guidelines, assessment tools, and criteria which were found to be too vague or too cumbersome to provide students with the tools needed to effectively and efficiently undergo a PLAR assessment. Faculty and assessors are beginning to offer alternative flexible forms of assessment to learners, such as: portfolio assessment; skill demonstrations; or workplace assessments that more effectively enable the learner provide evidence of their prior learning.

The design of a PLAR process in any institution must take into consideration the many factors that could impact student demand for these services, such as: high financial and human resource costs; arduous administrative requirements; inadequate communication to students of assessment guidelines and requirements resulting in wasted time and repetitious work; a lack of awareness and understanding of the PLAR process and the potential benefits; or, the risk that course credits obtained through PLAR will not be recognized by other formal post-secondary institutions and will be non-transferable.

They must also consider those factors that could impede the successful delivery of PLAR services, such as an inability to secure adequate funding to meet the significant costs of PLAR (as mentioned earlier, some institutions have had to scale back or stop PLAR activities due to a lack of funding); the need for proper remuneration of faculty for providing these services, and a fair allocation of PLAR duties in addition to existing workloads; or the need to conduct faculty orientation and consultation sessions to achieve a greater commitment to and understanding of the PLAR process.

The literature review and case studies revealed several best practices to consider adopting when implementing or revising a PLAR process, including: the determination of actual costs for the development and delivery of PLAR advising and assessment services; securing a project champion and the necessary resources for PLAR developmental and implementation activities; preparation of PLAR course blueprints that describe courses in terms of intended course outcomes, and the criteria for specific skills and knowledge to be demonstrated; providing adequate orientation or training courses to the faculty and the students regarding the assessment process; offering flexible methods of assessment and perhaps modularizing courses to assist in facilitating "top-up" training; streamlining assessment process to minimize time, cost, and paperwork for PLAR candidates; and developing informational and promotional materials (hard copy and/or electronic) for students and faculty directed at the education and awareness of the PLAR process, policies, and procedures.

### Student Survey

The findings of the student survey indicate there is majority support in the student body (three-quarters of the students surveyed) for utilizing PLAR to obtain credit for learning acquired outside of formal post-secondary training that meets the course intents of the NEPS. The full report of survey results is available in Appendix One.

Students indicated they had prior learning that could meet the majority of all of the course intents primarily for first and second year courses in the NEPS. Students indicated their prior learning principally has been obtained through either formal post-secondary education or work experience.

Well over half of the students surveyed have some previous work experience in the health care industry. It was discovered that there is a large pool of students who have experience as Home Care/Special Care Aides. Although not formally educated, these individuals indicated they have a significant amount of prior learning. Additional occupational cohorts that also feel they meet the majority or all of the NEPS course intents are Licensed Practical Nurses and Emergency Medical Technicians.

For those students that indicated they had prior learning, the majority felt this learning was recent (within the last five years), and that they could provide evidence of the learning.

### Focus Group

The findings from the student focus group session presented valuable insight into the students' perceptions and opinions regarding the level of prior learning individuals with health care experience may bring to the NEPS, and the level and type of participation students may be willing to provide for a PLAR process. The focus group concentrated on obtaining feedback from those occupational cohorts that had been identified in the student survey as having a significant level of prior learning, which included Home Care/Special Care Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Emergency Medical Technicians.

The students who participated in the focus group session feel there are clear discrepancies between the knowledge some students bring to the NEPS and what they are awarded credit for. They believe their prior work, academic, or volunteer/life experiences have prepared them well for the many of the clinical aspects and some human skills aspects of the first two years of NEPS. Students who practice as Licensed Practical Nurses feel there are a broader range of courses that they have the required knowledge and skills for, but for which they have not received recognition or credit. For students with prior learning, some components of the NEPS are repetitive and are not adding to the student's knowledge of nursing. Furthermore, some students do not feel they are receiving value for the money or time they are putting toward their education.

The students indicated they would appreciate the opportunity to utilize flexible forms of assessment that would enable them to obtain credit for learning that they feel meets the course intents of specific NEPS courses, but for which they have not been able to have recognized through traditional credit granting processes. However, they did place some conditions on the use of PLAR. For instance, the assessment process would need to be flexible and tailored to the unique needs and learning background of the student. There would need to be specific and clear guidelines provided to the student regarding the course intents to be met. The assessor would have to conduct a fairly comprehensive preliminary assessment with the PLAR candidates to ensure they did not spend time, effort, and money demonstrating learning that was inadequate to be awarded credit for the course. Finally, the level of effort and cost of the assessment services would have to be a fraction of that for a normal course, in order for students to realize sufficient benefit to utilize PLAR services over traditional course attendance.

The need for a prior learning assessment and recognition process that can be applied on a case-by-case basis was demonstrated in the diversity of backgrounds presented during the focus group session. For instance, even within an occupational category, students possess various levels of experience, training, and knowledge. One student reported having 10 years of experience as a resident care aide. This student had the opportunity to work with a progressive institution that allowed her to attend numerous seminars, which enriched her knowledge and skill base, above what home care/special care aides in other institutions may learn or experience. The other students with experience as Home Care/Special Care Aides agreed that while they have all obtained good knowledge and practice of basic care principles in their jobs, their learning was not as extensive as this individual.

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the literature review, student survey, focus group session, and steering committee feedback provided valuable direction for the recommendations and next steps the NEPS should take with regard to Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

The following recommendations are proposed:

1. **The NEPS should continue with activities around the implementation and monitoring of a pilot course (NURS 115.3 Core Concepts of Care) for PLAR, in the fall session of 2003/04.**

The results of the student survey indicate there is majority support in the student body (three-quarters of the students surveyed) for utilizing PLAR to obtain credit for learning acquired outside of formal post-secondary training, which meets the course intents of the NEPS.

The student feedback from the focus group session confirmed the appropriateness of the plans the NEPS have been making for offering a pilot PLAR process for NURS 115.3 in 2003-2004 Regular Session. Students participants in the focus group believe their prior work, volunteer/life experiences, and academic formation has prepared them well for many of the clinical aspects and for some human skills aspects of the first two years of the NEPS. NURS 115.3 was one of the first classes the students felt should be readied for PLAR. The students indicated that those learners with previous experience working in the health-care system working (i.e., LPNs, HC/SCAs, EMTs, etc.) were already competent regarding the basic concepts of care, and felt they should have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, especially in the practical portion of NURS 115.3.

2. **The NEPS should seek funding for and implement a cost/benefit analysis of undertaking a PLAR process in the nursing program.**
    - **Faculty orientation, development, assessment, and remuneration**
    - **Student orientation, workload/time, fees, PLAR student liaison**
    - **Institutional support implications**
    - **Transferability of PLAR credits to other post-secondary institutions**

Both the literature review and direct contacts emphasized a number of critical issues that may hinder any proposed PLAR initiatives. These issues revolve around insufficient funding and human resources to deliver PLAR and support students through the process; low subscription rates by students and prospective students due to arduous time and cost requirements; as well as the risk that a PLAR credit gained at one institution may not be recognized by another due to non-standardized reporting requirements.

The unanimous advice is to ensure that all costs and resource requirements are identified in the planning stages leading to a PLAR process, and that sufficient funding is in place to meet the significant costs of developing *and* implementing PLAR (as mentioned earlier, some institutions have had to scale back or stop PLAR activities due to a lack of initial or continued funding).

As a result, it is recommended the NEPS undergo a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether it is feasible to develop and deliver a PLAR process that meets the needs of both the institution and the students.

3. **Provided the cost/benefit analysis indicates it is feasible to proceed further with PLAR, the NEPS should seek funding for PLAR development and implementation of selected NEPS courses as identified in the project.**

4. **The NEPS should conduct an ongoing review of transfer credit for formal learning from accredited post-secondary institutions.**

In recognition that student learning, which meets the learning outcomes of a NEPS course, can be previously acquired from another accredited post-secondary institution(s), and that other types of educational programs are continuously evolving, the NEPS will need to continue their review of transfer of credit possibilities on an ongoing basis.

5. **The NEPS should demonstrate continued commitment to processes that acknowledge prior learning of NEPS students.**

    b. **Exploring NEPS curriculum activities supportive of PLAR, bridging, and other RPL options.**

    c. **Exploring other health-related initiatives that are currently undertaking PLAR strategies to enhance career laddering.**

    d. **Supporting interdisciplinary educational programming that allows for RPL possibilities within the health disciplines.**

Secondary research and ongoing communication with health-care sector partners has revealed there are several initiatives currently being undertaken or in the planning stages to examine the potential for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) strategies (Saskatchewan Learning includes three major forms of learning recognition in its definition of RPL: Credit Transfer, Qualification Recognition, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition).

The NEPS should continue to engage in curriculum review activities/programming and participate on interdisciplinary committees in order to: share knowledge and best practices gained from research, avoid duplication of research efforts, or to learn about other options of recognizing learning to facilitate the faster progression of students through the NEPS.

## 8 ACTION PLAN FOR NEXT STEPS

The NEPS recognizes the need for the ongoing review of related health care programs and initiatives for RPL options and alternative approaches to credit granting. As part of its ongoing curriculum process, the NEPS is already addressing recommendations number one and four. For recommendation number one, the NEPS is in the process of launching a pilot PLAR course for NURS 115.3 Core Concepts of Care in the academic year 2003/04.

Additional actions the NEPS will be taking in the future as a result of the needs assessment findings and recommendations include:

1. **The development of a communication strategy regarding the release of the needs assessment report.**
    a. **Publish electronic copy of report on SIAST and U of S websites.**
    b. **The Steering Committee members will be responsible for disseminating the final report to its respective constituents/members.**
2. **The submission of a request for funding to explore possible strategies regarding recognition of prior learning in the NEPS.**
3. **The implementation of recommendation number five to demonstrate continued commitment to processes that acknowledge prior learning of NEPS students.**
    a. **Exploring NEPS curriculum activities supportive of PLAR, bridging, and other RPL options.**
    b. **Exploring other health-related initiatives that are currently undertaking PLAR strategies to enhance career laddering.**
    c. **Supporting interdisciplinary educational programming that allows for RPL possibilities within the health disciplines.**

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# APPENDIX ONE

## FINAL SURVEY REPORT:

## PLAR NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE NEPS

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The second stage of research in the NEPS-PLAR Needs Assessment consisted of conducting a survey of all first-to-third year NEPS students. Student involvement in the study was an important and necessary component of the project. It enabled the assessment of how many students, once admitted to the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan, perceive they have a level of relevant prior learning significant enough to merit developing a PLAR process; as well as, the proportion of students that would be interested in utilizing PLAR to facilitate a faster progression through the program.

The student survey was held during the week of January 20th, 2003. Two hundred and seventy one students out of a total of approximately 763 first-to-third year NEPS students participated (a 35% response rate). There was an even distribution of students among the first-to-third year cohorts, with each respective year representing approximately one-third of total sample. The respondents were predominantly women, many of who were between 18 to 23 years of age.

This sample size provides a fair representation of the responses of the whole group of NEPS students within + or - 5%, 19 times out of 20 (95% confidence level). For example, 69% of students who participated in the survey indicated they would be interested in utilizing the PLAR process. This means that we can be 95% confident that between 64%-74% of the entire NEPS student population would have responded similarly.

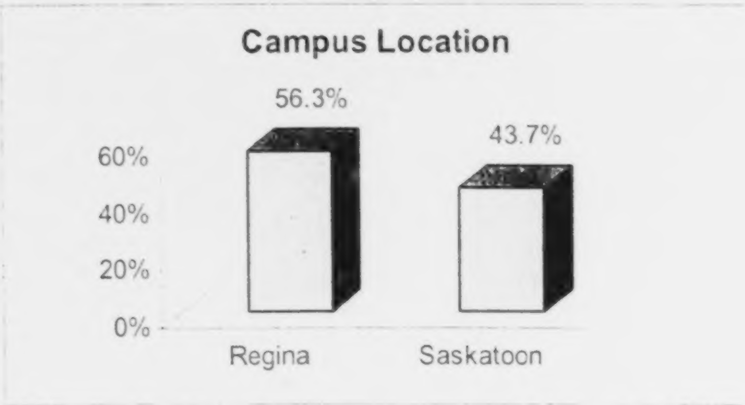
**Note:** The student survey was not to serve as an assessment of a student's prior learning by the NEPS, and this report only provides a summary of student responses regarding their perceived level of prior learning relative to NEPS course intents and their interest in utilizing PLAR.

**Note:** Appendix A contains the open-ended (verbatim) responses of the NEPS students to any questions that asked the student to specify their education, occupation, or how they obtained their prior learning.

## 2. GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

### 2.1 Location

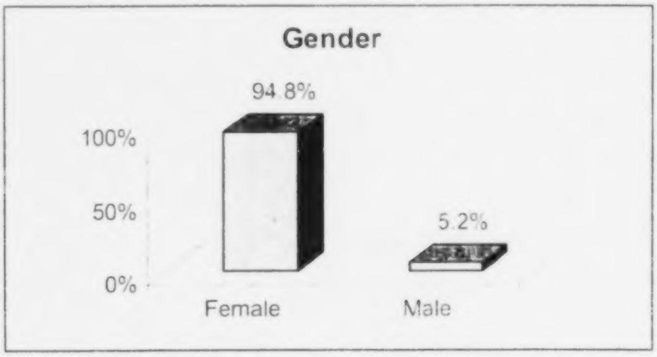
The respondents were fairly distributed between Regina and Saskatoon, with 56% of participating students attending the Regina NEPS site, and the remaining 44% of students receiving their education in Saskatoon.



n=270 (number of students who responded to this question)

## 2.2 Gender

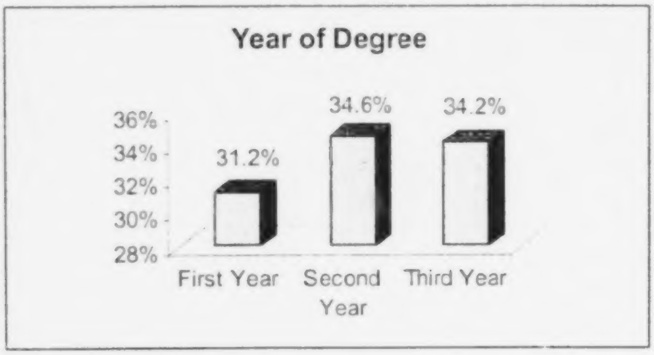
Not surprisingly, due to the traditional enrollment by gender in the Nursing Program, the proportion of female participants is significant.



n=270

## 2.3 Current Year in NEPS Program

There was an even distribution of student participants from each year of the NEPS program (excluding fourth year students who did not participate in study).

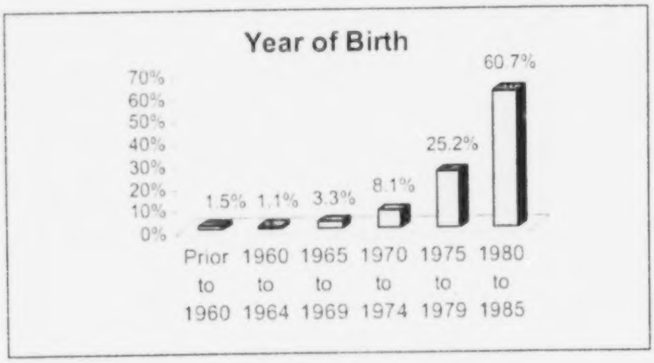


n=269

There was no significant relationship between the year of the program the respondent was currently registered in and their level of prior learning.

## 2.4 Year of Birth

The majority of students (61%) who participated in the survey were born between 1980 to 1985 (between 18 and 23 years of age in 2003). One-quarter of the students were born between 1975 to 1979 (between 24 to 28 years of age in 2003), while the remaining 14% of students were more mature.

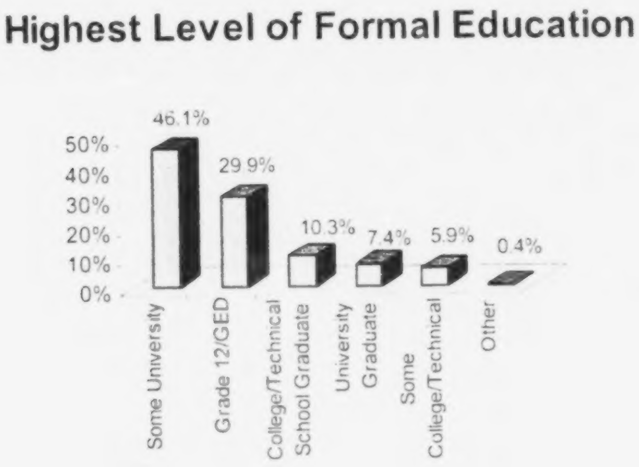


n=270

A comparison of age and level of prior learning confirmed that older students who were 24 years of age or over had more prior learning and experience that they felt could be applied to the majority or all of the NEPS learning intents.

## 2.5 Highest Level of Formal Education

Nearly one-half of student participants (46%) indicated that they had some university as their highest level of education. Almost one-third of students had a grade 12 education prior to entering the NEPS program, while 10% had graduated from a college or technical institution and 7.4% had a university degree.

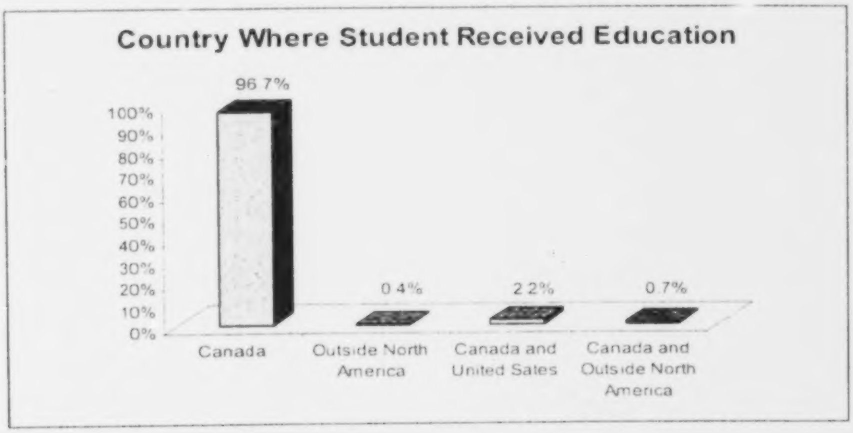


n=271

The students' level of formal education was cross-tabulated with their perceived level of prior learning for each nursing course listed in the survey. Appendix B contains charts that indicate the highest level of education held by those students who stated they had previously learned the majority or all of the course intents. Additional information regarding student's highest level of education compared with health care occupations can be found in Appendix C.

### 2.6 Country Where Student Received Education

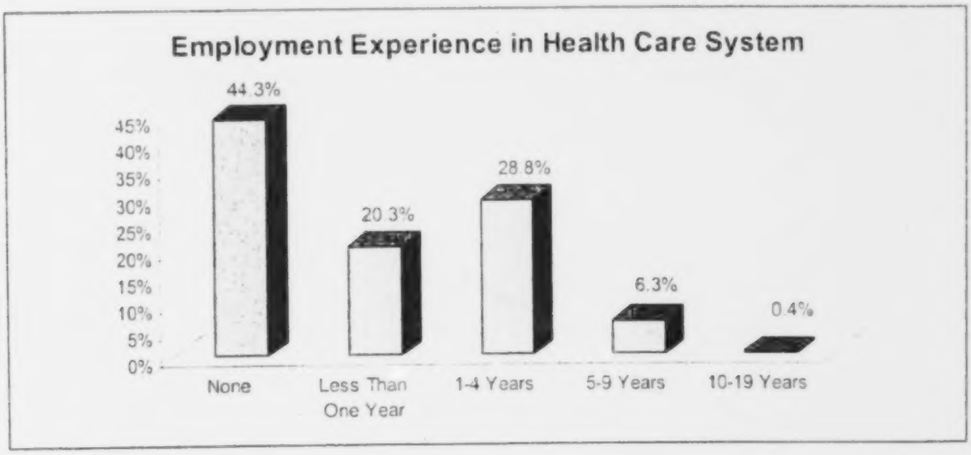
As illustrated in the chart below, there are only a handful of students who had received their prior formal education outside of Canada or North America.



n=271

### 2.7 Employment Experience in Health Care System

Over half of student respondents (56%) had some type of employment experience in the health care system, with the largest cohort being students that had 1-4 years work experience (28%), followed by those with less than one year of work experience (20%).



n=271

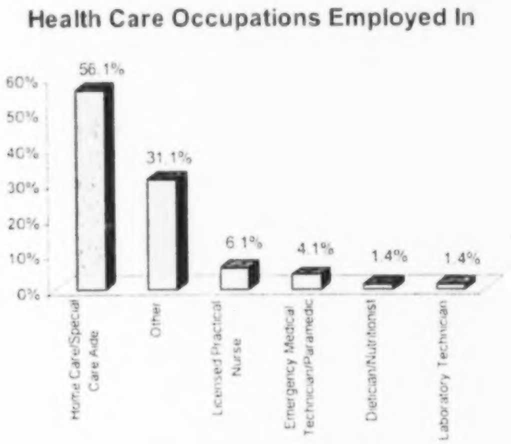
Although employment experience is an important indicator of prior learning, a lack of employment experience, by respondents in the health care industry, did not rule out the existence of relevant prior learning that could meet the majority or all of the learning intents. This is especially true for the human skills courses: NURS 112.3 Development of Self, NURS 114.3 Interpersonal Relationships, and NURS 211 Counseling Nursing Practice. Those individuals with no related work experience comprised the largest proportion of students who indicated they could meet some level of the course intents.

However, in general, the respondents with 1-4 years work experience were most often the largest cohort to indicate they could meet the majority or all of the learning intents.

### 2.8 Health Care Occupations

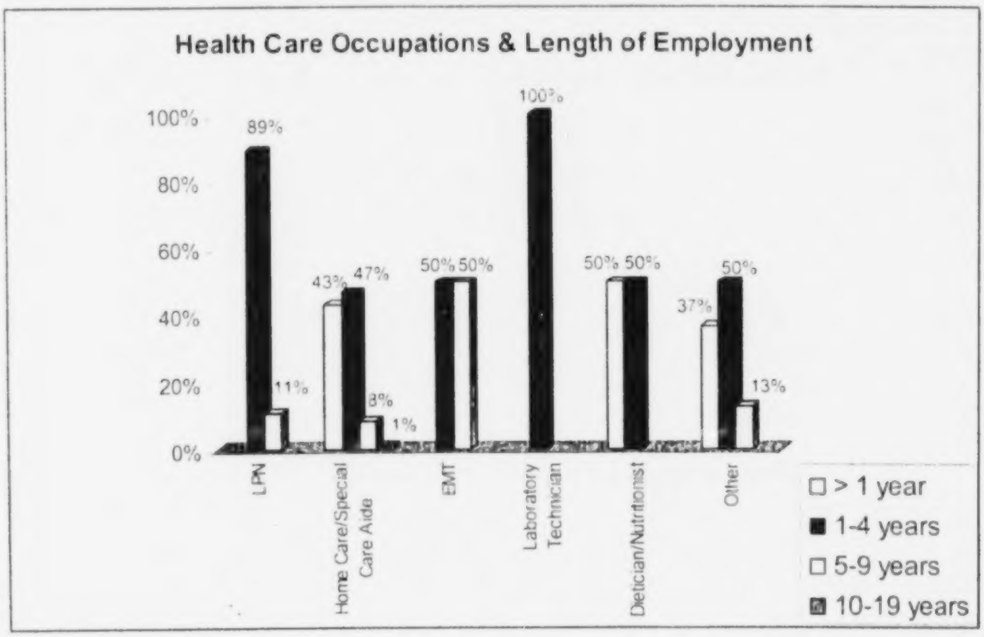
More than half of the students (56% or 83 of 148) that indicated they had experience working in a health-care related field reported they had worked or are currently working as Home Care/Special Care Aides. However, upon cross-referencing the student's work experience with their education, it was discovered that only three individuals actually had received formal educational training as Home Care/Special Care Aides. The majority of the remaining students had received some university education (52% or 43 of 83 Home Care Aides).

Nearly one third of students (31%) were employed in health care occupations other than those listed in the questionnaire. A list of these occupations can be found in Appendix A.



n=148

Health care occupations were cross-tabulated with the student's perceived level of prior learning for each nursing course listed in the survey. Appendix B contains charts that indicate what type of work experience students had who felt they had previously learned the majority or all of the course intents. Due to their large number, the Home Care/Special Care Aides made up the largest occupational group who indicated they had significant prior learning for the majority of NEPS courses. However, LPNs had equal or greater representation, primarily in second and third year courses. This may be due to the fact that a greater number of LPNs had already received a transfer of credit for first year courses, but felt they had a significant level of prior learning for second and third year courses.



n=148

The majority of students with previous health-care work experience had between 1 to 4 years experience. This includes the majority of LPNs (7 of 9) and both Laboratory Technicians.

There two main groups of Home Care Special Care Aides. Forty-three percent of the students (36 of 83) had worked as a Home Care/Special Care Aide for less than one year, while another 47% (39 of 83) had worked between 1-4 years in this occupation.

An equal proportion of students who had practiced as EMT's and Dietician's had worked for either 1-4 years or 5-9 years.

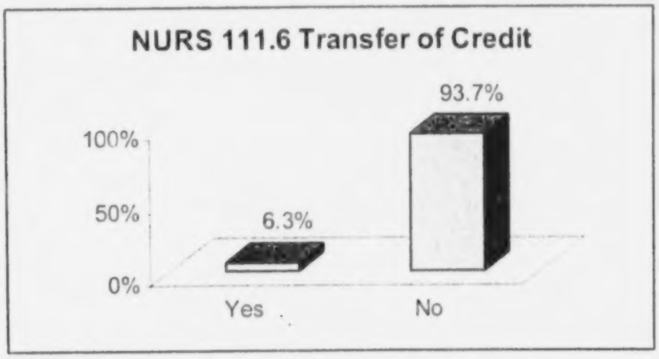
# 3. RELATING PRIOR LEARNING TO NEPS COURSE INTENTS

## 3.1 NURSING 100 LEVEL COURSES

### 3.1.1 NURS 111.6 – Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body

**Transfer of Credit**

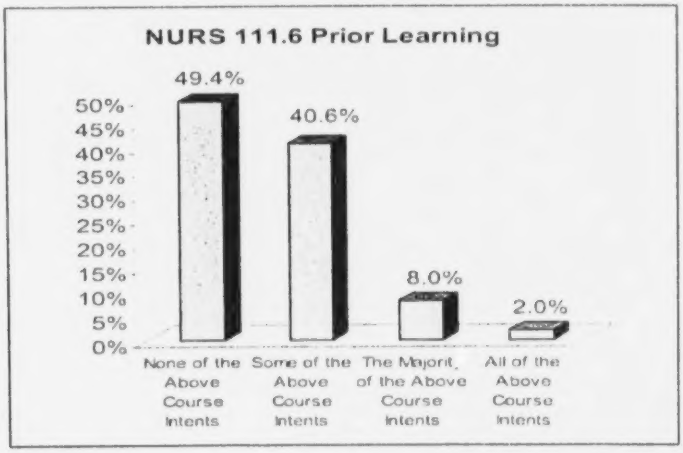
Six percent of students (17 of 271) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 111.6.



n=271

**Level of Prior Learning**

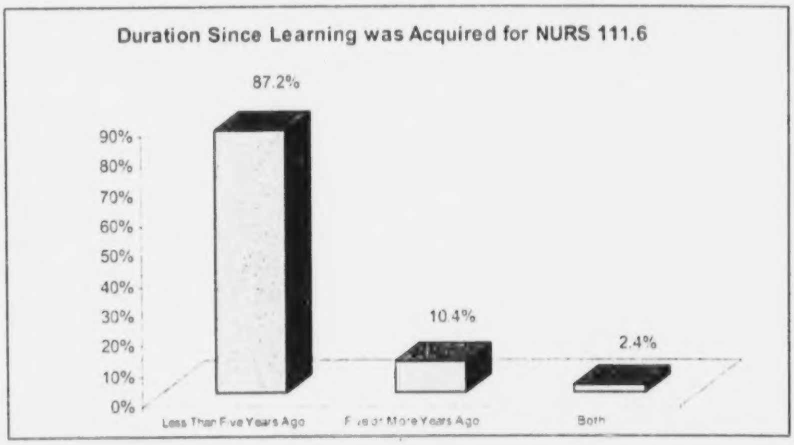
Half of the students (50.6% or 126 of 249) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 111.6. Of these, 40% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 10% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=249

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

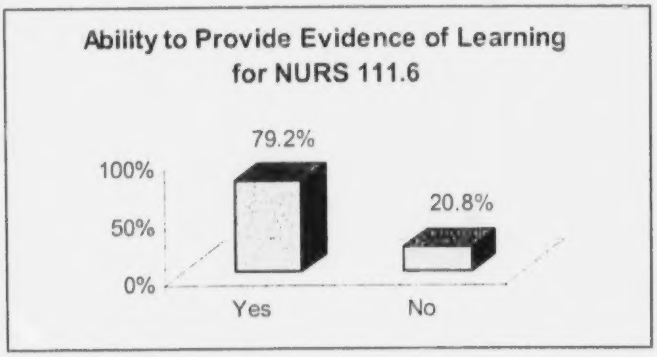
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 111.6 (87% or 109 of 125) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago.



n=125

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

The majority of these students (79% or 99 of 125) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

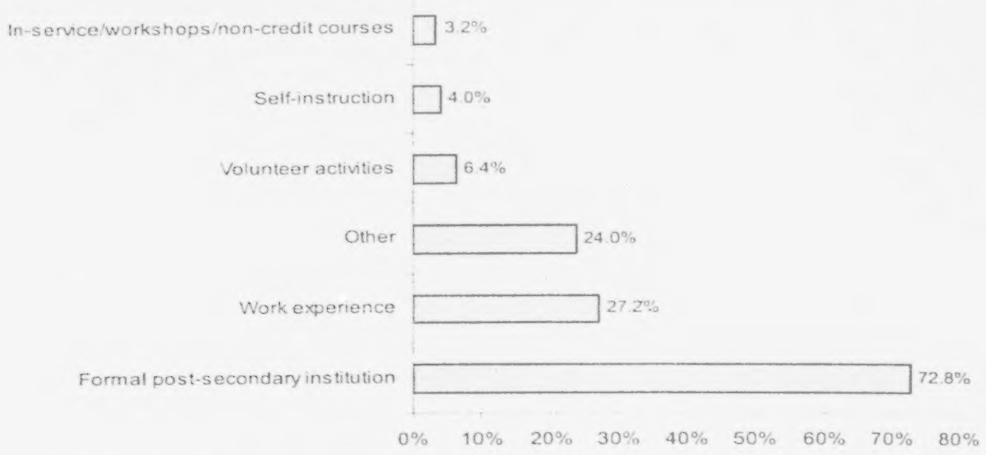


N=125

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

Nearly three-quarters of these students (72%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through a formal post-secondary institution. Over one-quarter of the students (27%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience. Many of students that fell into the other category stated that their prior learning had come from high school education, primarily Biology 30 (not Anatomy/Physiology at university level).

**How Learning was Acquired For NURS 111.6**

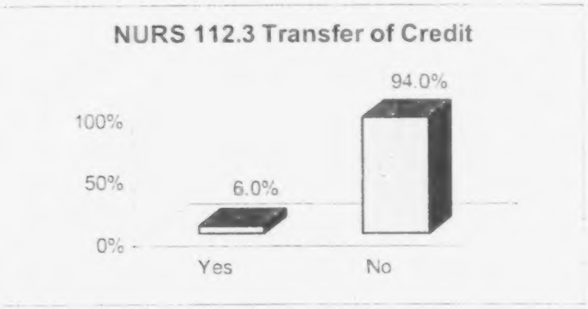


n=125 (number of students who responded to this question)
total responses=172 (note some students had more than one response/way learning was acquired)

### 3.1.2 NURS 112.3 – Development of Self

### Transfer of Credit

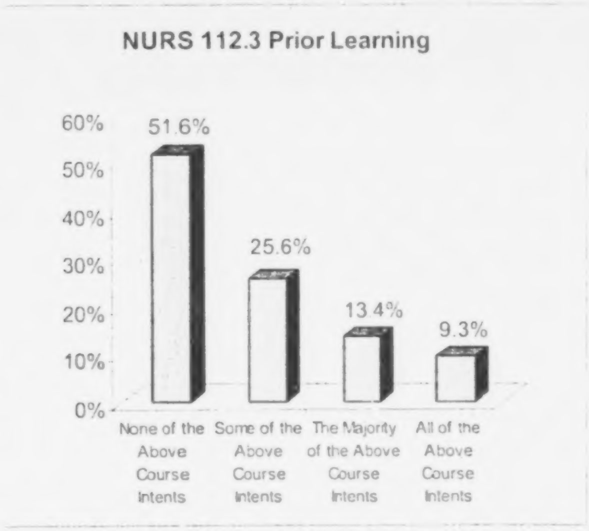
Six percent of students (16 of 268) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 112.3.



n=268

## Level of Prior Learning

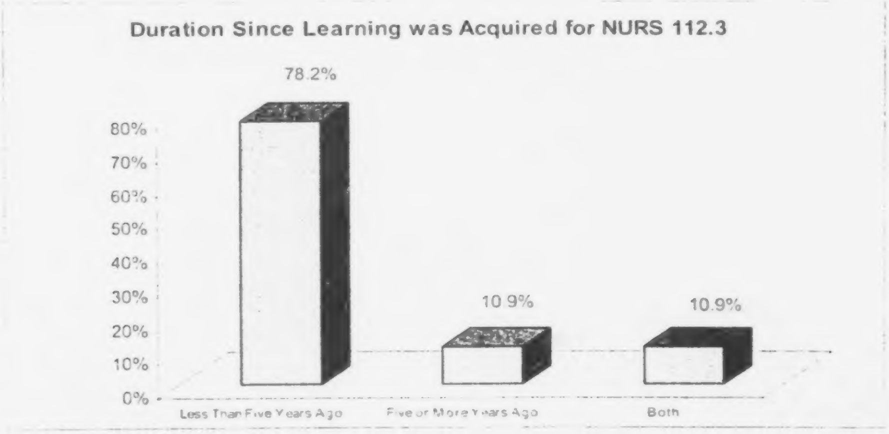
Just less than half of the students (48% or 119 of 246) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 112.3. Of these, one-quarter (25%) perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 23% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=246

## Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

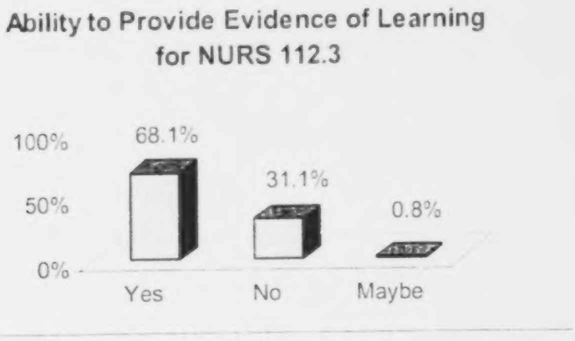
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 112.3 (78% or 93 of 119) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 11% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=119

## Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

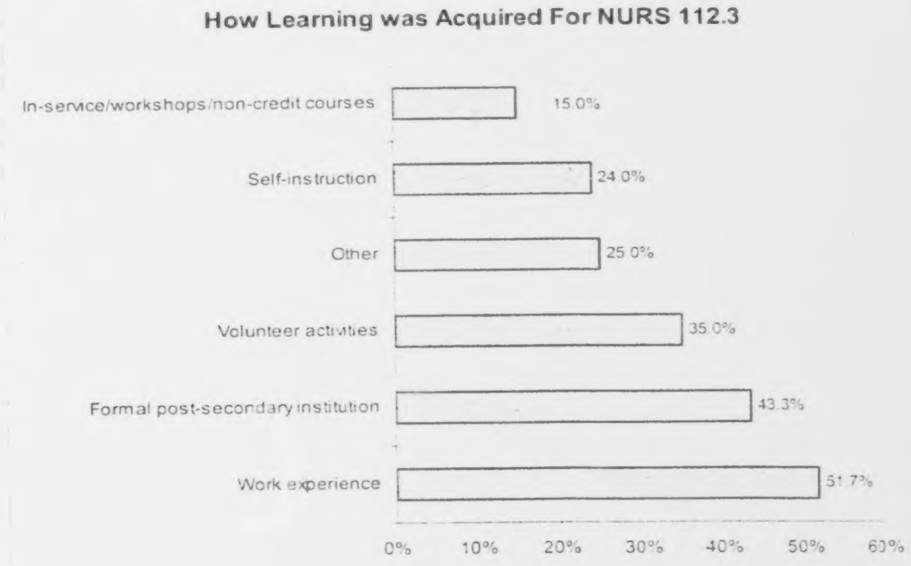
More than two thirds of these students (68% or 81 of 119) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=119

## How Prior Learning was Acquired

Just over fifty percent of these students (51.7%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through work experience. Forty-three percent of students felt they had acquired relevant learning through formal post-secondary education, while 35% had acquired learning through volunteer activities. Nearly one-quarter of the students (24%) responded that their prior learning had come from self instruction, and another 25% of respondents indicated their learning came from other means, primarily various life experiences.

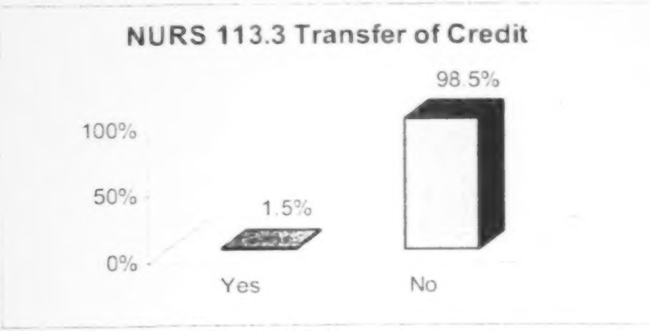


n=120
tr=233

### 3.1.3. NURS 113.3 – Nursing: An Evolving Profession

**Transfer of Credit**

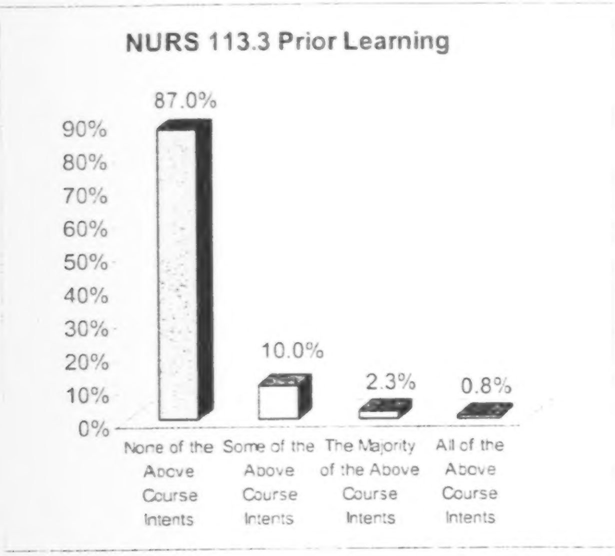
Only 1.5% of students (4 of 270) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 113.3.



n=270

**Level of Prior Learning**

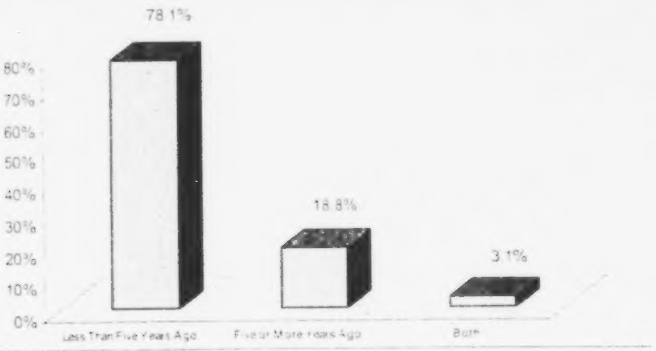
Thirteen percent of the students (34 of 261) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 113.3. Of these, 10% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 3.1% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=261

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

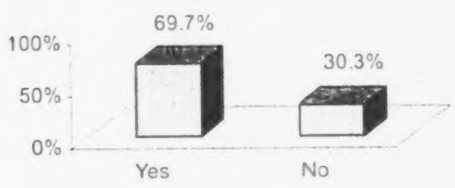
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 113.3 (78% or 25 of 32) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 3% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.


Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 113.3

n=32

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

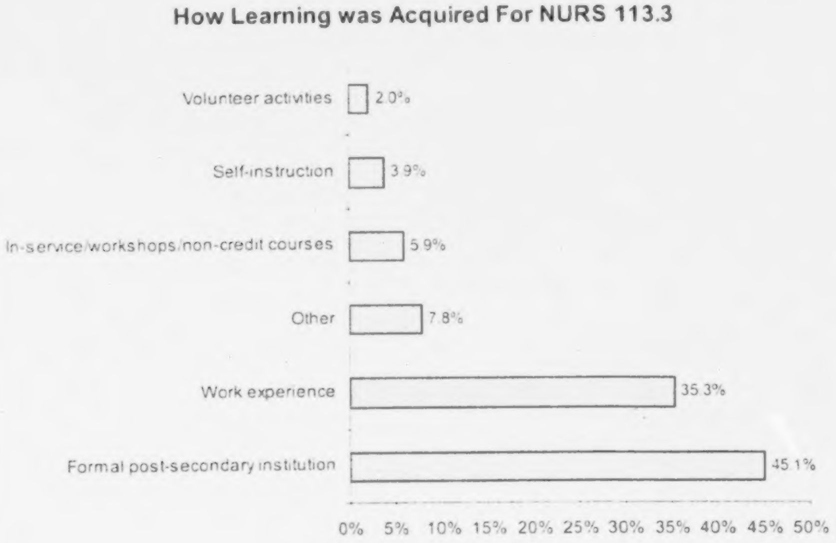
The majority of these students (70% or 23 of 33) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.


Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 113.3

n=33

**How Prior Learning was Acquired**

Students primarily acquired their prior learning for NURS 113.3 through formal post-secondary education (45.1%) and/or through work experience (35.3%).

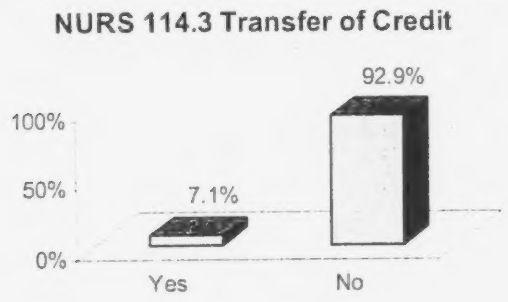


n=33
tr=51

### 3.1.4 NURS 114.3 – Interpersonal Relationships

**Transfer of Credit**

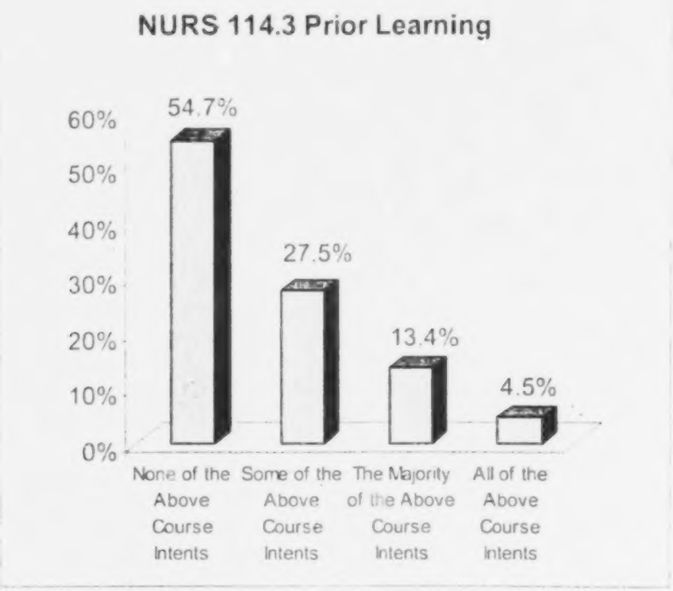
Seven percent of students (19 of 267) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 114.3.



n=267

### Level of Prior Learning

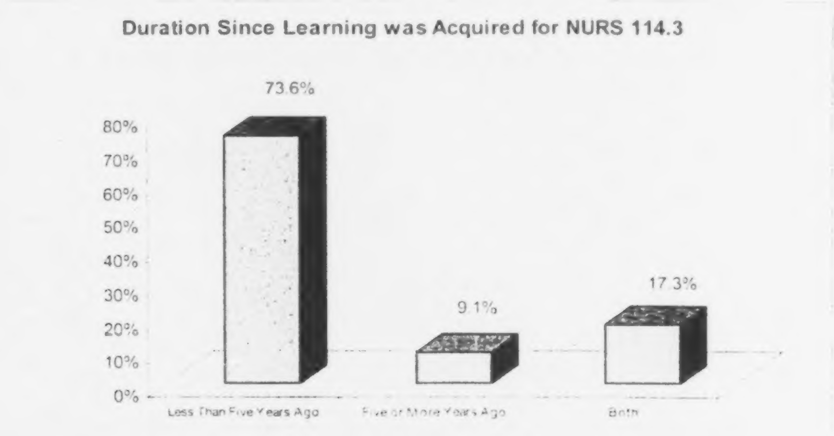
Just less than half of the students (45% or 112 of 247) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 114.3. Of these, 27% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 18% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=247

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

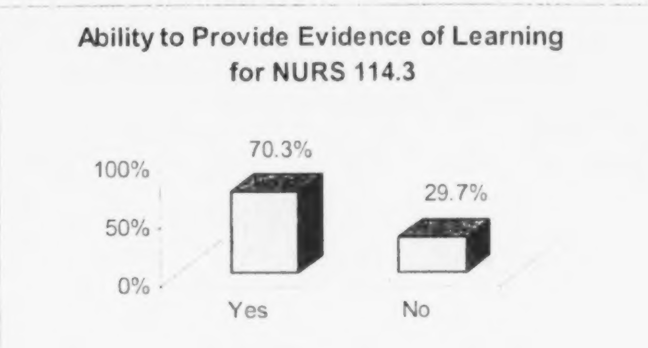
Nearly three-quarters of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 114.3 (74% or 81 of 110) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 17% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=110

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

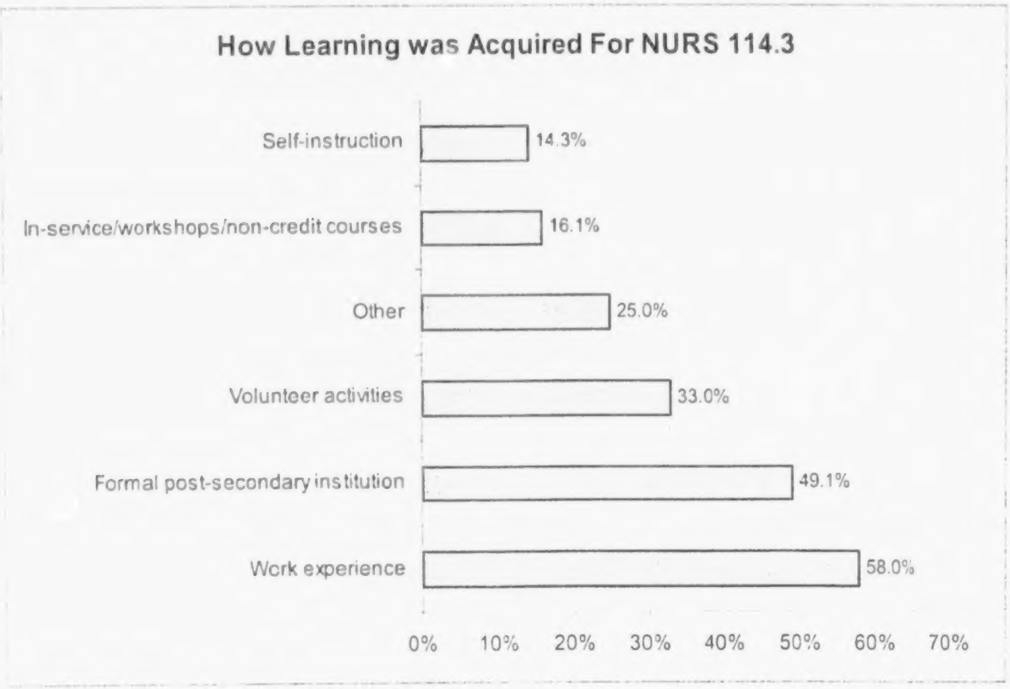
The majority of these students (70% or 78 of 111) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=111

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The largest majority of students (58%) indicated they acquired their prior learning through work experience; just less than half gained relevant learning through formal post-secondary education. One third of students felt they had acquired prior learning through volunteer activities, and one quarter indicated their learning came from other means, primarily various life experiences.

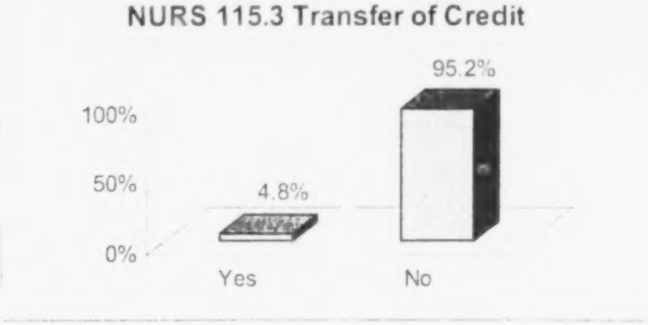


n=112
tr=219

### 3.1.5 NURS 115.3 – Core Concepts of Care

**Transfer of Credit**

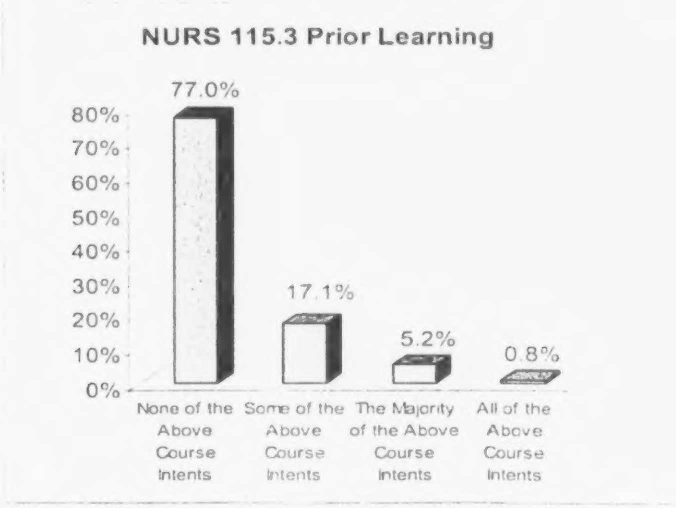
Approximately five percent of students (13 of 270) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 115.3



n=270

**Level of Prior Learning**

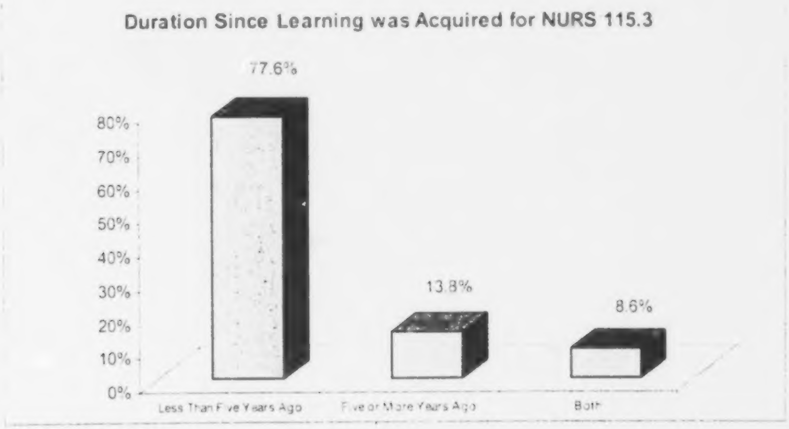
Nearly one quarter of students (23% or 58 of 252) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 115.3. Of these 17% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 6% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=252

## Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

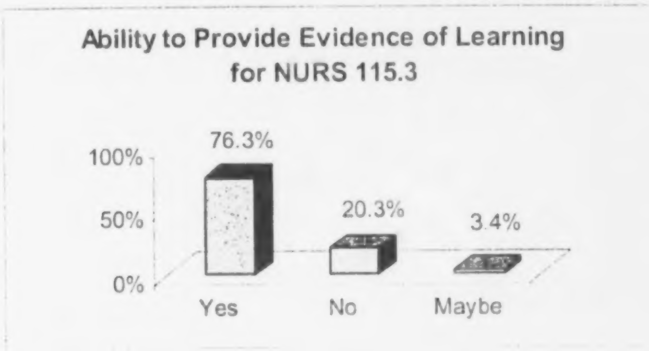
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 115.3 (78% or 45 of 58) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago.



n=58

## Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

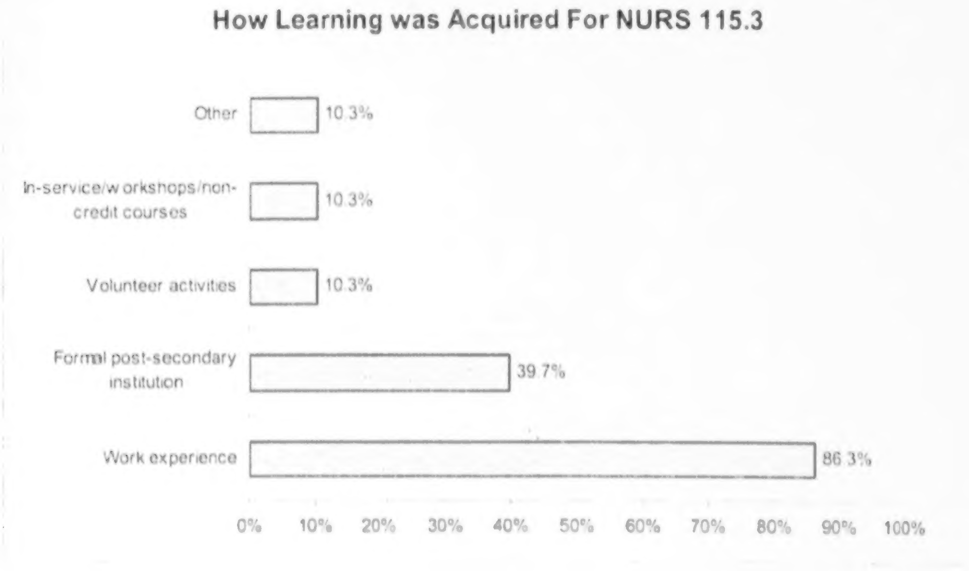
The majority of these students (76% or 45 of 59) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=59

**How Prior Learning was Acquired**

The vast majority of these students (86%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through work experience, while 40% responded that prior learning had come from other formal post-secondary education.

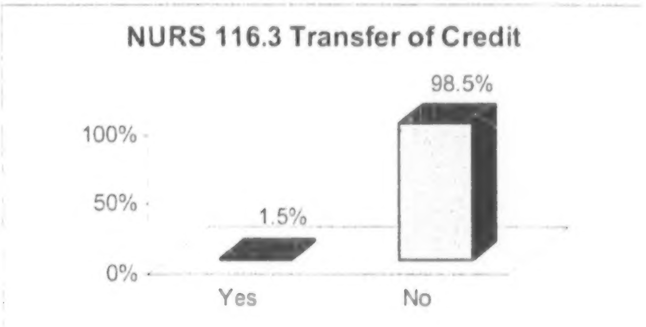


n=58
tr=91

### 3.1.6 NURS 116.3 – Introduction to Health Concepts

**Transfer of Credit**

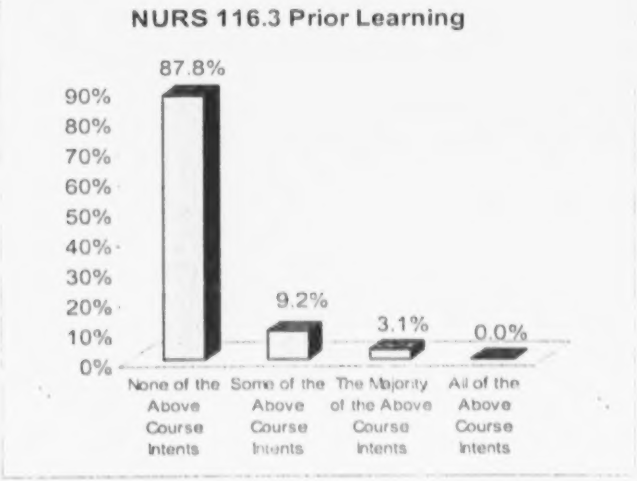
Only 1.5% of students (4 of 270) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 116.3.



n=270

## Level of Prior Learning

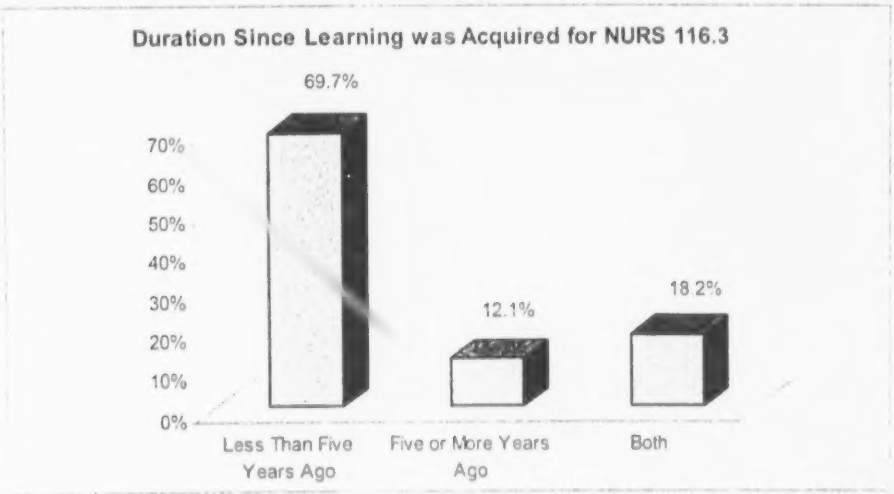
Twelve percent of the students (32 of 262) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 116.3. Of these, 9% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, 3.1% felt they could meet the majority of the above course intents, while no one felt they could meet all the course intents.



n=262

## Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

Over two-thirds of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 116.3 (70% or 23 of 33) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 18% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.

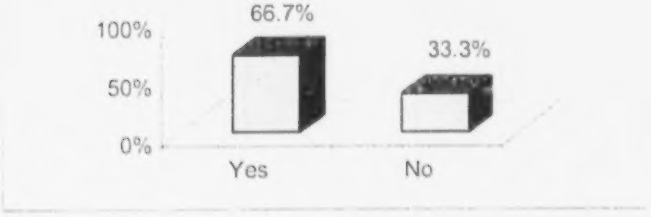


n=33

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

Two thirds of these students (66% or 22 of 33) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

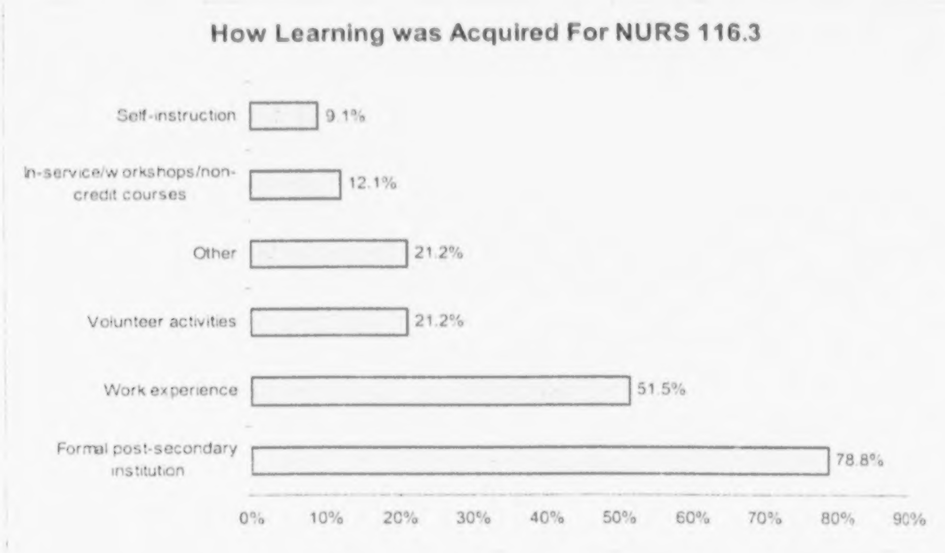
**Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 116.3**



n=33

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

Over three-quarters of these students (79%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through a formal post-secondary institution. More than half of the students (52%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience.


**How Learning was Acquired For NURS 116.3**

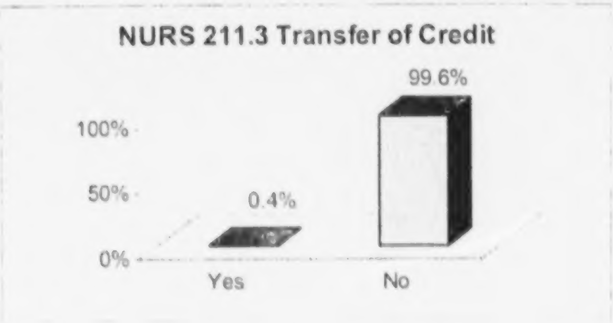
n=33
tr=64

## 3.2 NURSING 200 LEVEL COURSES

### 3.2.1 NURS 211.3 – Counseling in Nursing Practice

**Transfer of Credit**

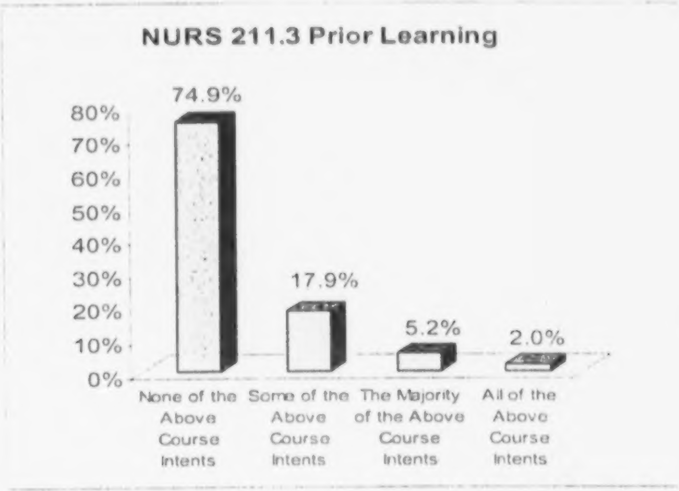
Only one student indicated they had received a transfer of credit for NURS 211.3.



n=257

**Level of Prior Learning**

One quarter of the students (25% or 63 of 251) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 211.3. Of these, 18% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 7% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.

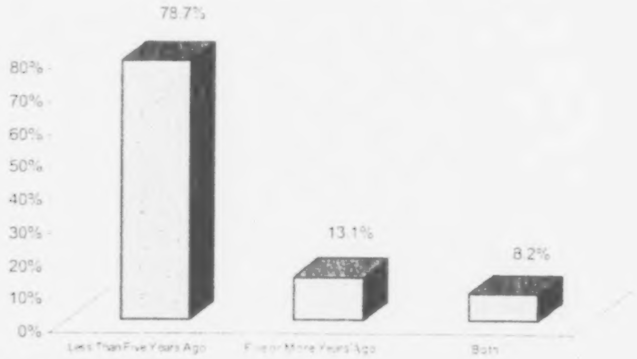


n=251

## Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 211.3 (79% or 48 of 61) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 8% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.

Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 211.3

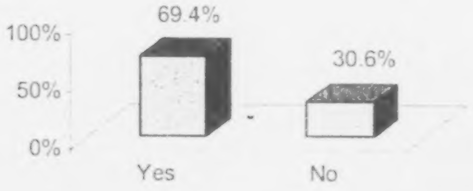


n=61

## Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

The majority of these students (70% or 43 of 62) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

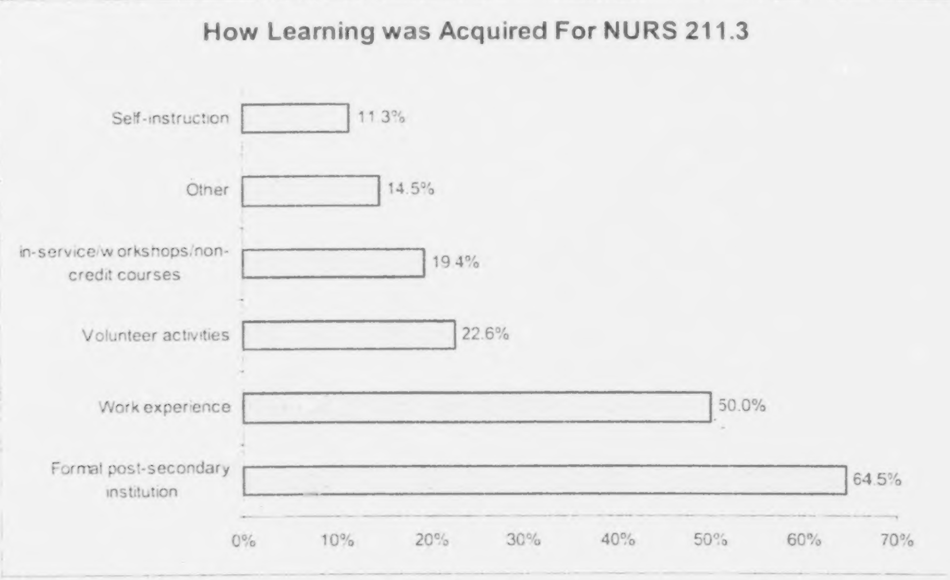
Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 211.3



n=62

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of respondents indicated that they had obtained prior learning for NURS 211.3 through either formal post-secondary education (64.5%) or work experience (50%).

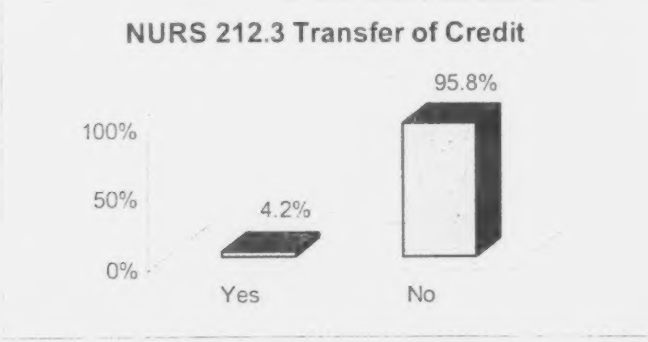


n=62
tr=113

### 3.2.2 NURS 212.3 – Microbiology for Health Sciences

### Transfer of Credit

Four percent of students (11 of 261) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 212.3.

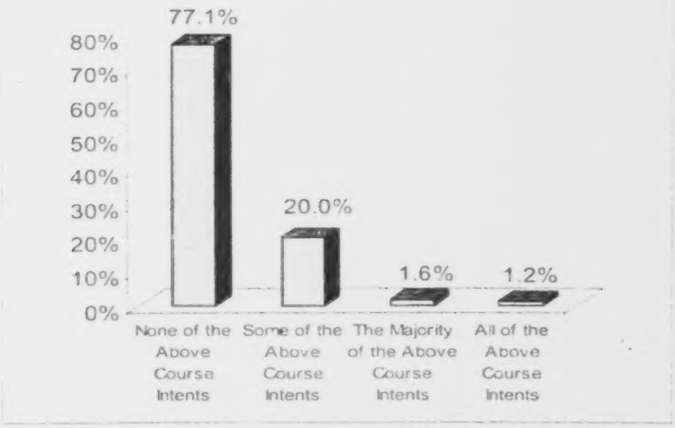


n=261

### Level of Prior Learning

Nearly one quarter of the students (23% or 56 of 245) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 212.3. Of these, 20% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 3% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.

NURS 212.3 Prior Learning

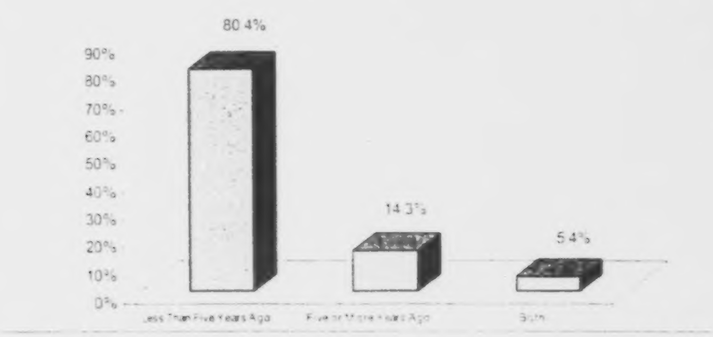


n=245

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 212.3 (80% or 45 of 56) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 5% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.

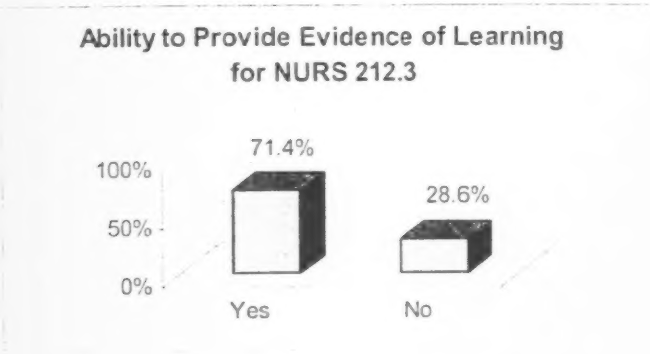
Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 212.3



n=56

## Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

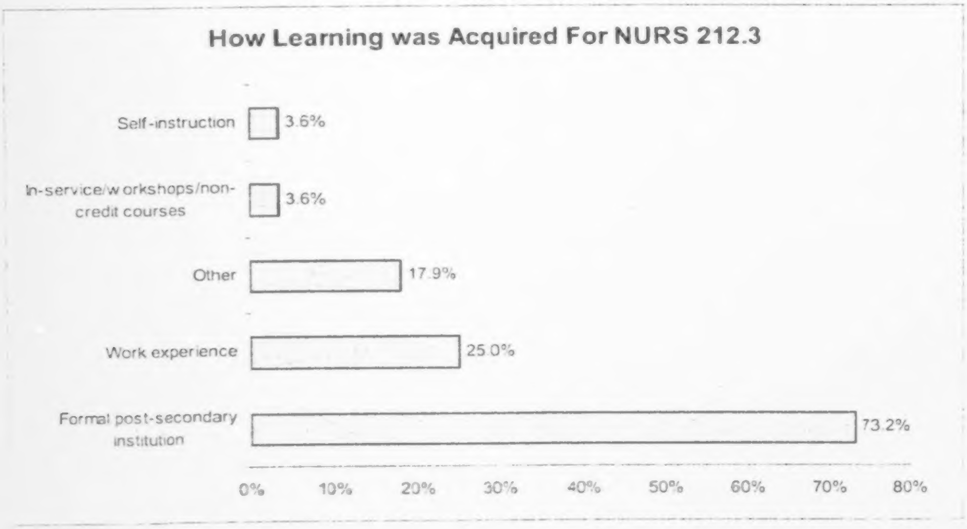
The majority of these students (71% or 40 of 56) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=56

## How Prior Learning was Acquired

Nearly three-quarters of these students (73%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through a formal post-secondary institution. One-quarter of the students (25%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience.

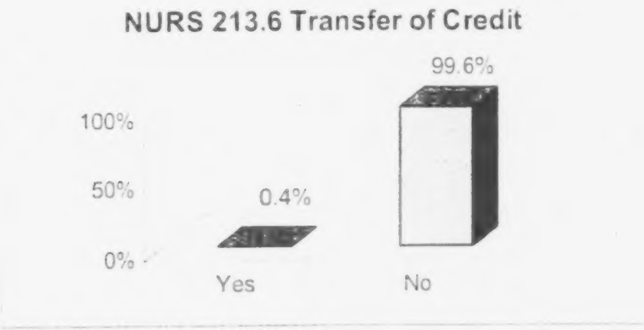


n=56
tr=69

### 3.2.3 NURS 213.6 – Therapeutics and Nursing Intervention

**Transfer of Credit**

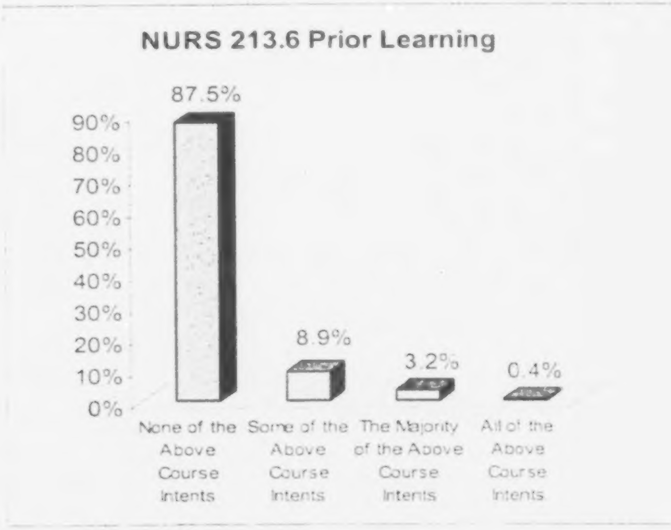
Only one student has received a transfer of credit for NURS 213.6.



n=256

**Level of Prior Learning**

Twelve percent of the students (31 of 248) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 213.6. Of these, 9% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 3.6% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.

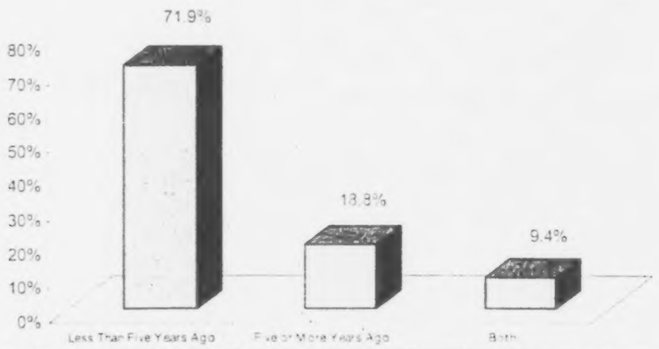


n=248

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

Nearly three quarters of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 213.6 (72% or 23 of 32) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 9% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.

**Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 213.6**

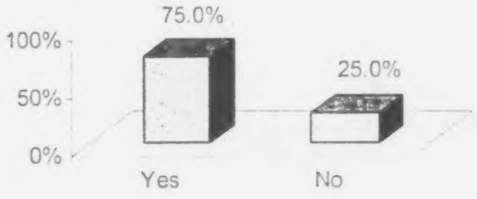


n=32

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

Three quarters of the students (75% or 24 of 32) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

**Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 213.6**

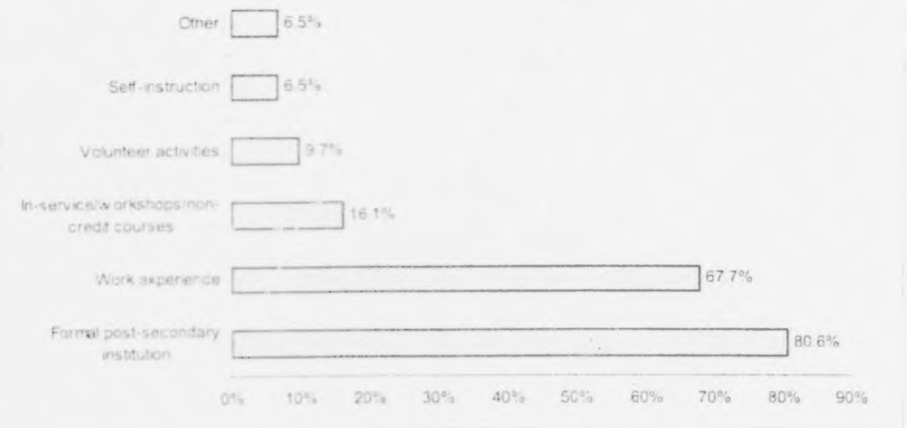


n=32

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

Eighty percent of these students indicated they had acquired their prior learning through a formal post-secondary institution, while 68% of their learning had come from work experience. Sixteen percent of student responded that their learning had come from in-services, workshops, or non-credit courses.

**How Learning was Acquired For NURS 213.6**



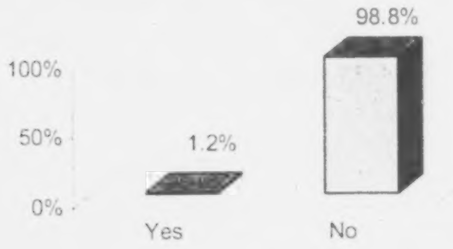
n=31
tr=58

### 3.2.4 NURS 215.3 – Health Challenges of Adults I

### Transfer of Credit

Three students (1%) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 215.3.

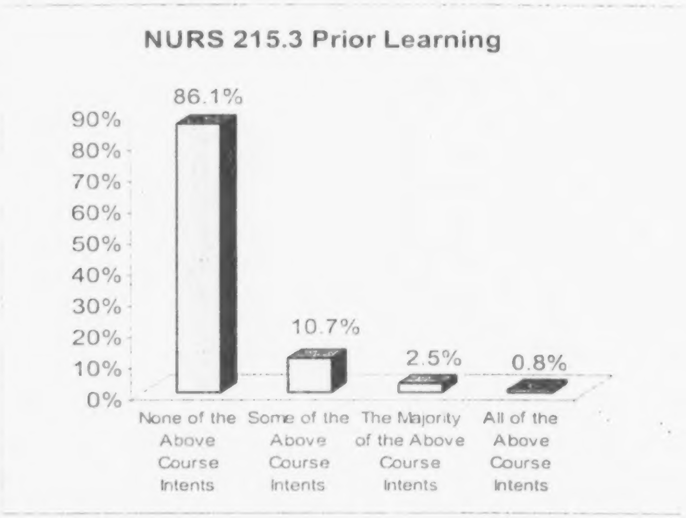
**NURS 215.3 Transfer of Credit**



n=254

### Level of Prior Learning

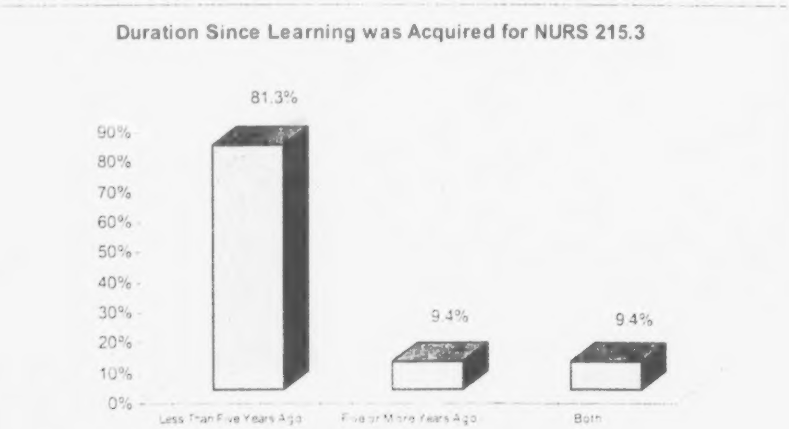
Fourteen percent of the students (34 of 244) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 215.3. Of these, 11% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 3.3% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=244

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

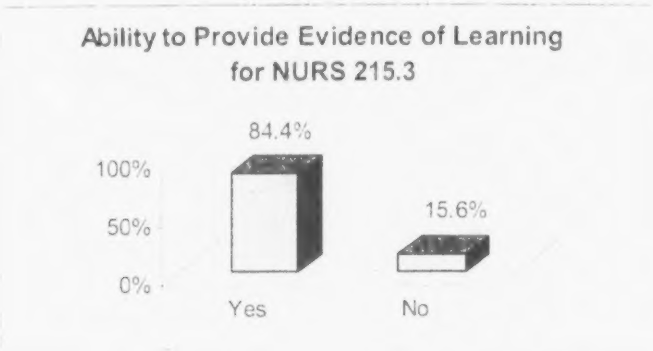
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 215.3 (81% or 26 of 32) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 9% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=32

## Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

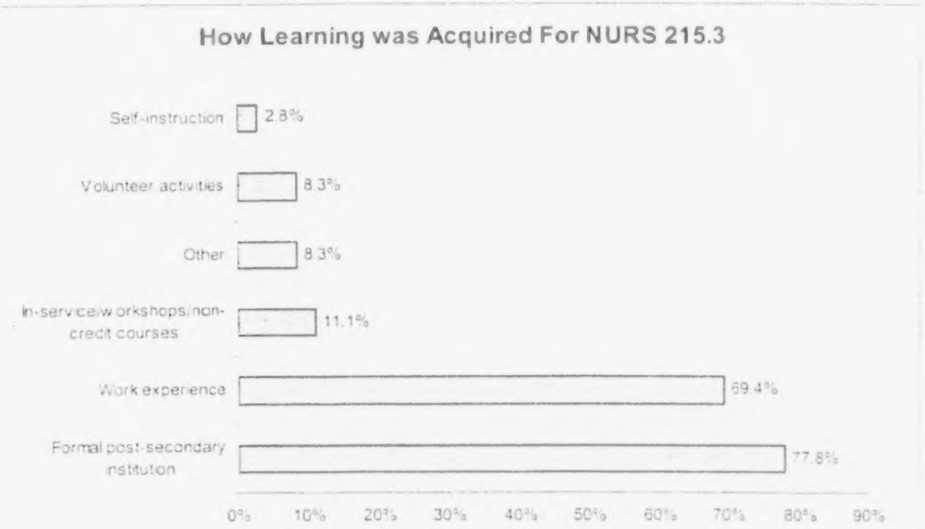
The majority of these students (84% or 27 of 32) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=32

## How Prior Learning was Acquired

Over three-quarters of these students (78%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through a formal post-secondary institution, while over two-thirds (69%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience.

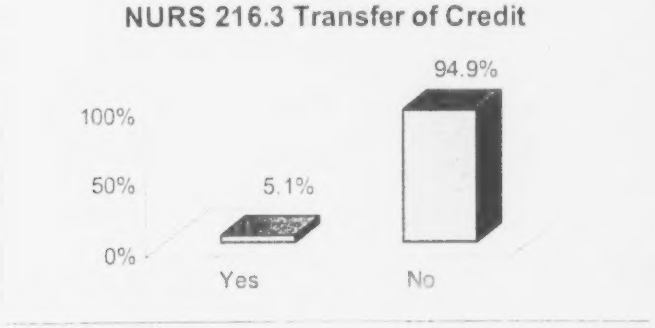


n=36
tr=64

### 3.2.5 NURS 216.3 – Healthy Growth and Development

**Transfer of Credit**

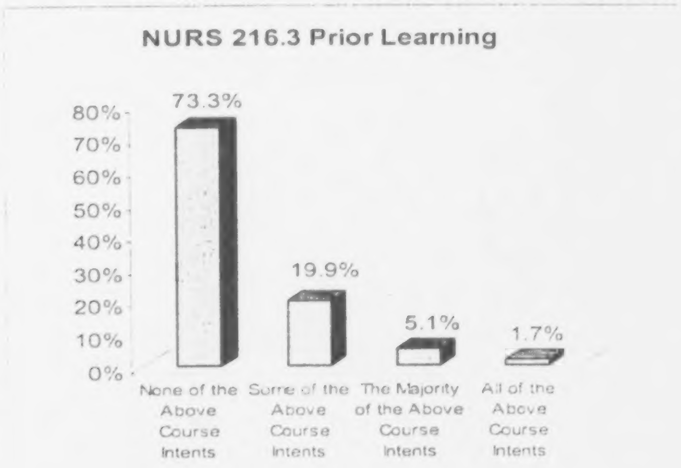
Five percent of students (13 of 255) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 216.3.



n=255

**Level of Prior Learning**

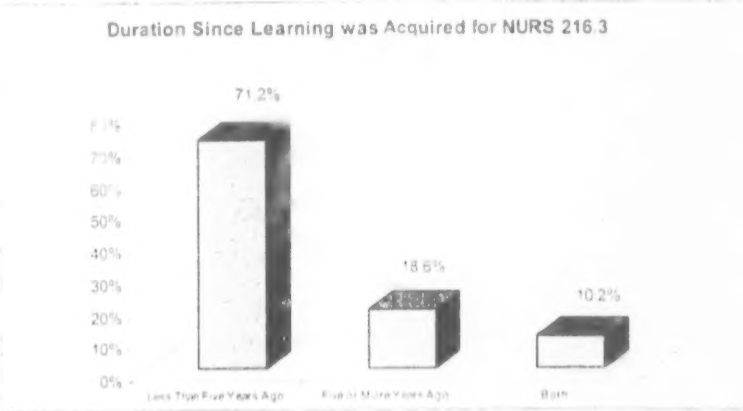
Over one-quarter of the students (26.7% or 63 of 236) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 216.3. Of these, 20% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 6.8% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=236

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 216.3 (71% or 42 of 59) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 10% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.

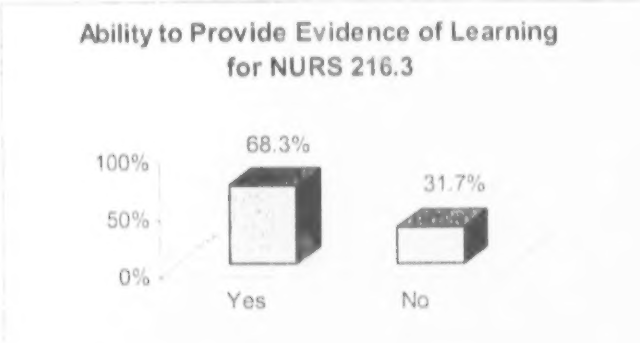


Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 216.3

n=59

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

Over two-thirds of these students (68% or 41 of 60) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

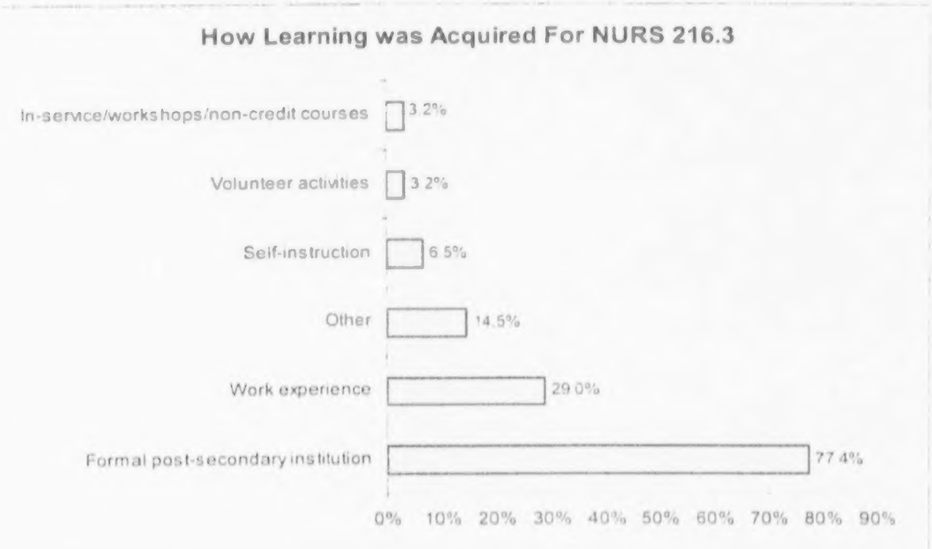


Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 216.3

n=60

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

Over three-quarters of these students (77%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through a formal post-secondary institution. Nearly one-third of the students (29%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience.

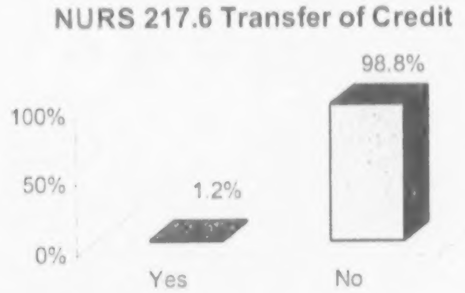


n=62
tr=83

### 3.2.6 NURS 217.6 – Individual Assessment

### Transfer of Credit

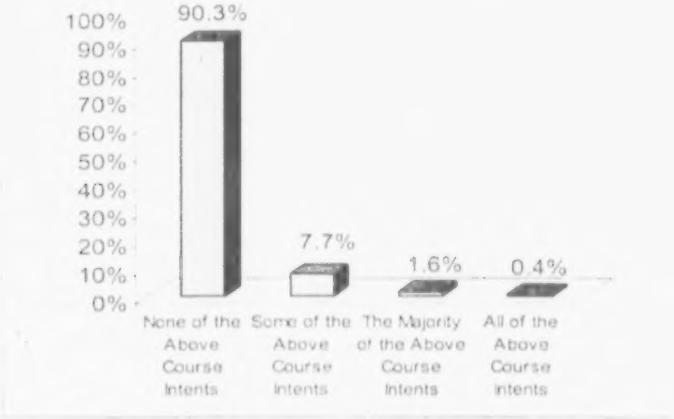
Three students (1%) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 217.6.



n=254

### Level of Prior Learning

Ten percent of the students (24 of 247) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 217.6. Of these, 8% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 2% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.

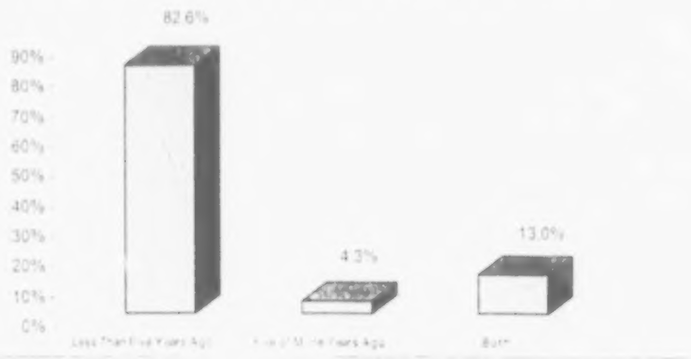


NURS 217.6 Prior Learning

n=247

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 217.6 (83% or 19 of 23) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 13% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.

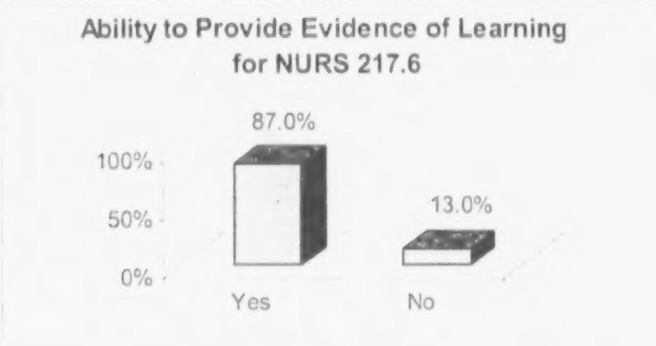


Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 217.6

n=23

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

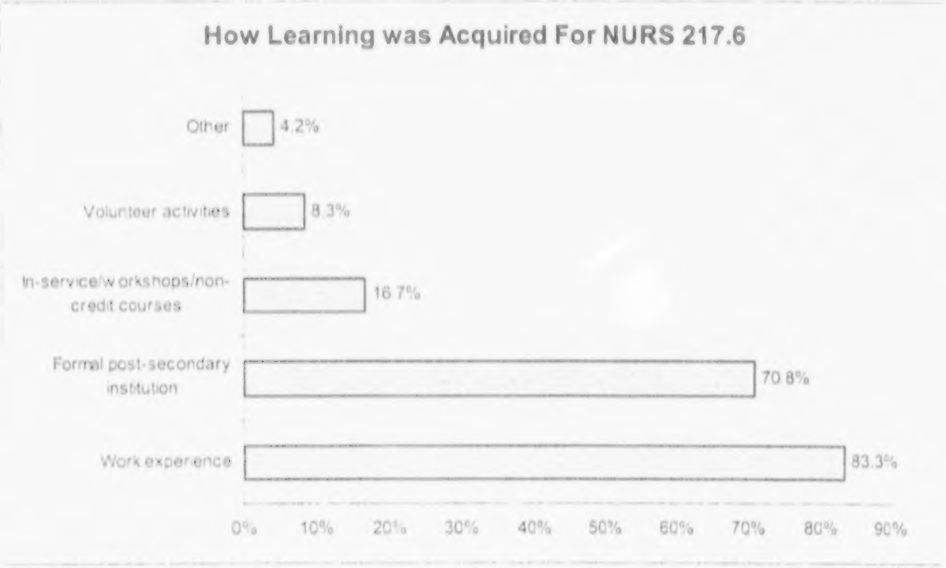
The majority of these students (87% or 20 of 23) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=23

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of students indicated their prior learning was acquired through work experience (83%) and/or formal post-secondary education (71%). Nearly 17% of student responded that their learning had come from in-services, workshops, or non-credit courses.

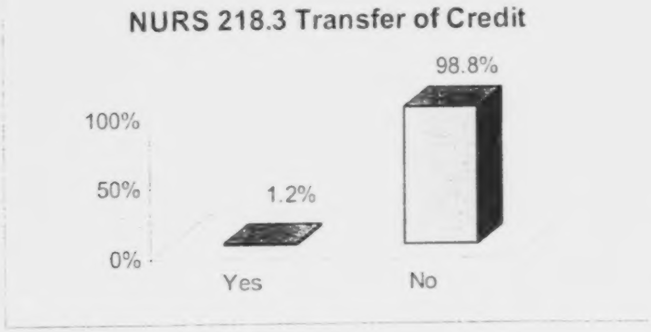


n=24
tr=44

### 3.2.7 NURS 218.3 – Education for Health

**Transfer of Credit**

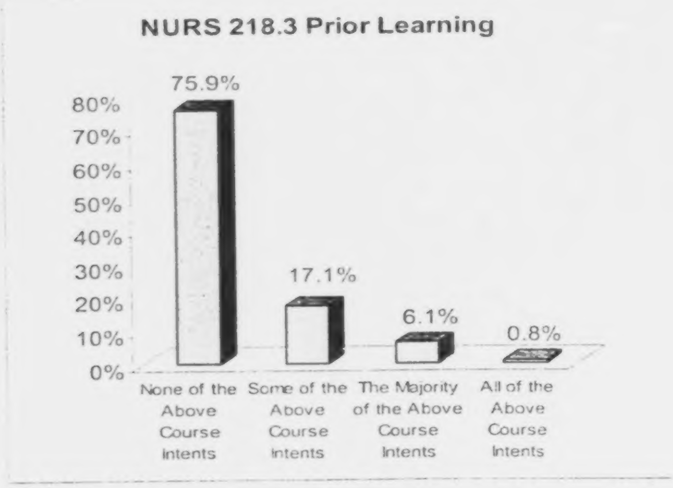
Three students (1%) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 218.3.



n=254

**Level of Prior Learning**

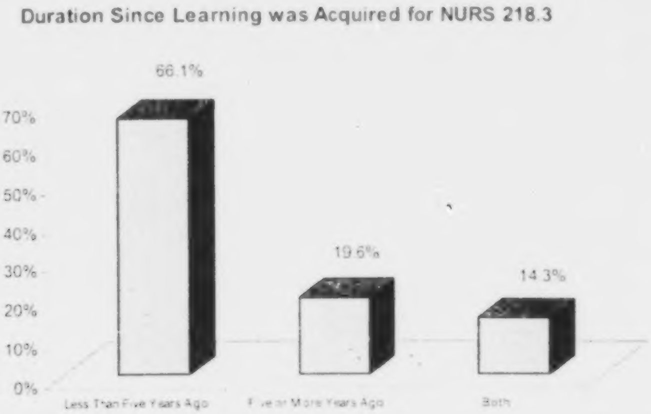
Nearly one quarter of the students (24% or 59 of 245) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 218.3. Of these, 17% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 7% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=245

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

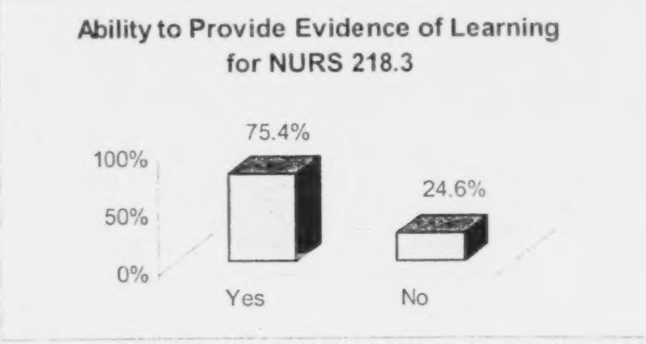
Two-thirds of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 218.3 (66% or 37 of 56) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 14% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.


Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 218.3

n=56

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

Three quarters of these students (75% or 43 of 57) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

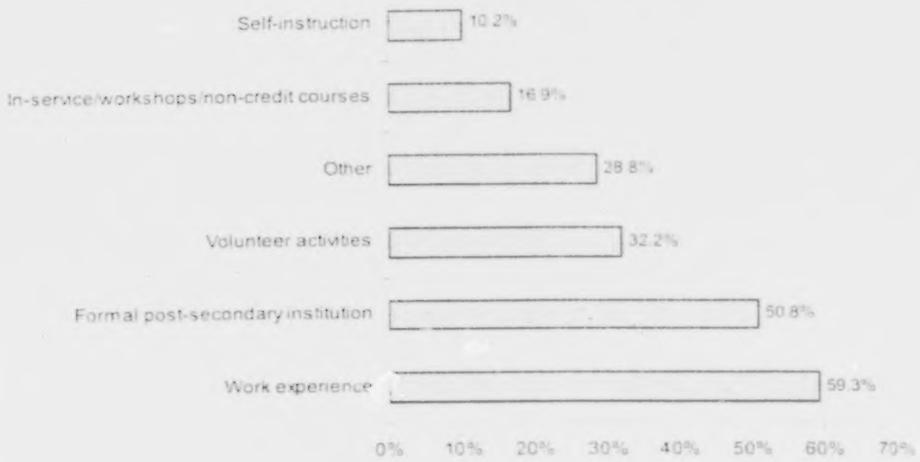

Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 218.3

n=57

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of students acquired prior learning for NURS 218.3 through either work experience (59.3%) or formal post-secondary education (50.8%). Almost one-third of students (32.2%) felt their volunteer activities were also a source of relevant prior learning.

How Learning was Acquired For NURS 218.3



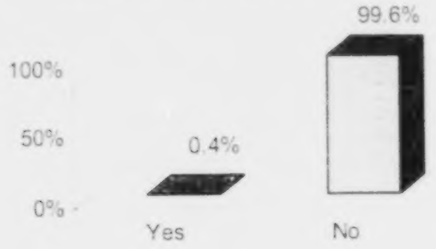
n=59
tr=117

### 3.2.8 NURS 219.3 – Health Challenges of Adults II

### Transfer of Credit

Only one student has received a transfer of credit for NURS 219.3.

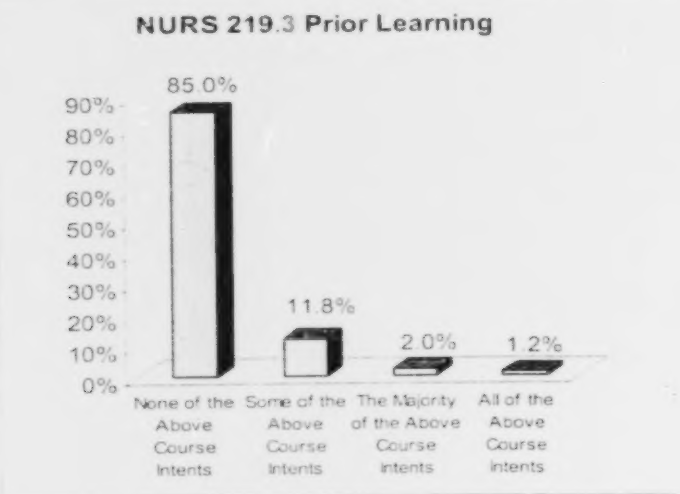
NURS 219.3 Transfer of Credit



n=253

### Level of Prior Learning

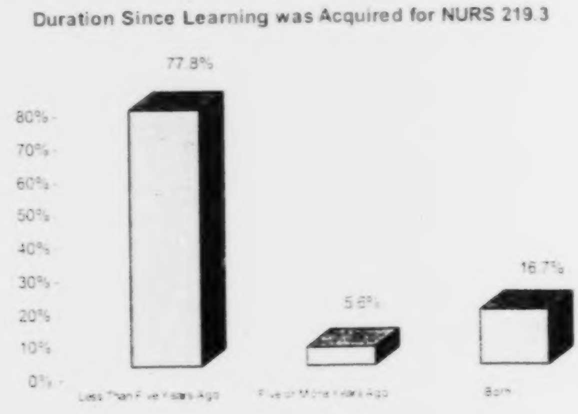
Fifteen percent of the students (37 of 246) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 219.3. Of these, 12% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 3% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.


NURS 219.3 Prior Learning

n=246

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

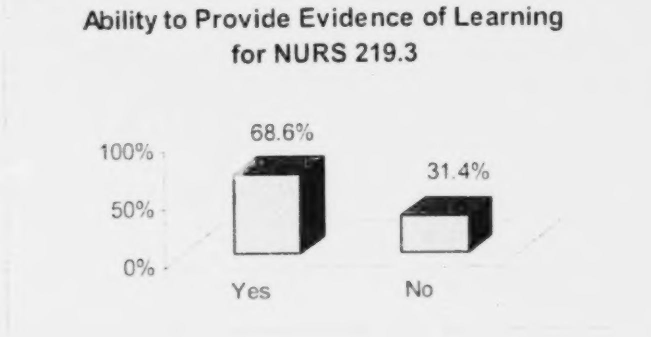
Over three quarters of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 219.3 (78% or 28 of 36) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 17% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.


Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 219.3

n=36

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

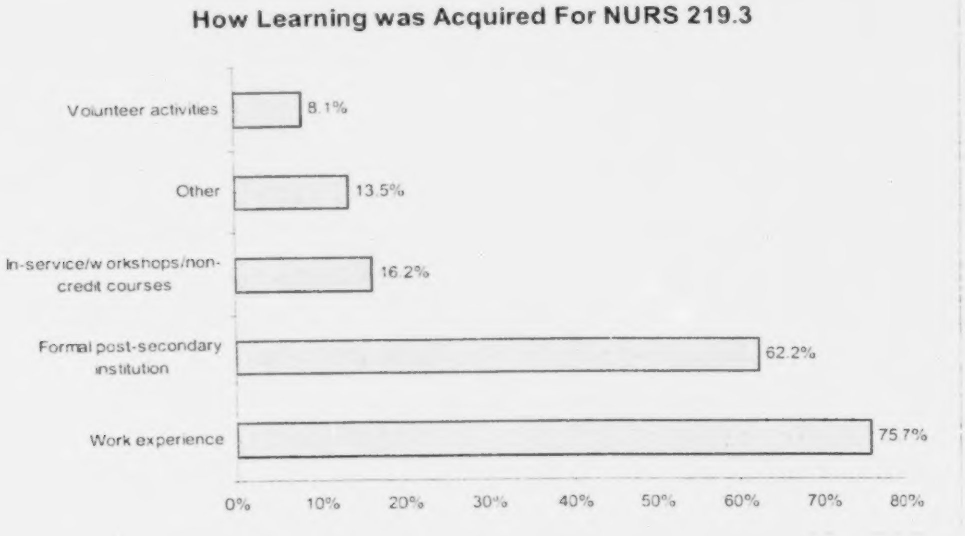
Over two-thirds of these students (68% or 24 of 35) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=35

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

Three-quarters of these students (75%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through work experience. Nearly two-thirds of the students (62%) responded that their prior learning had come from formal post-secondary education.

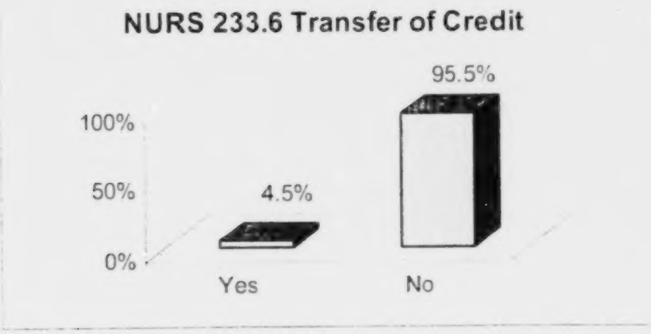


n=37
tr=65

### 3.2.9 NURS 233.6 – Practicum I

**Transfer of Credit**

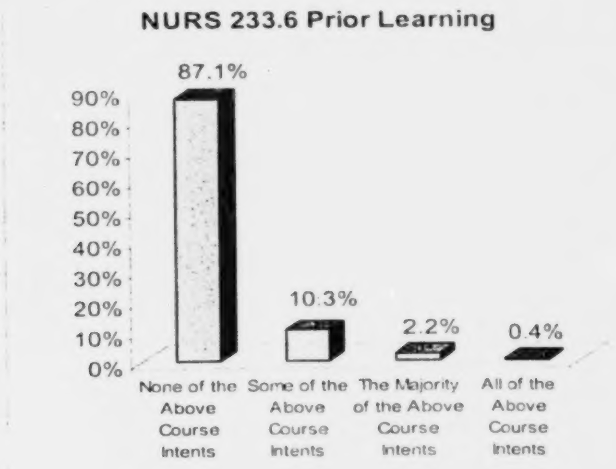
Nearly five percent of students (11 of 242) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 233.6.



n=242

**Level of Prior Learning**

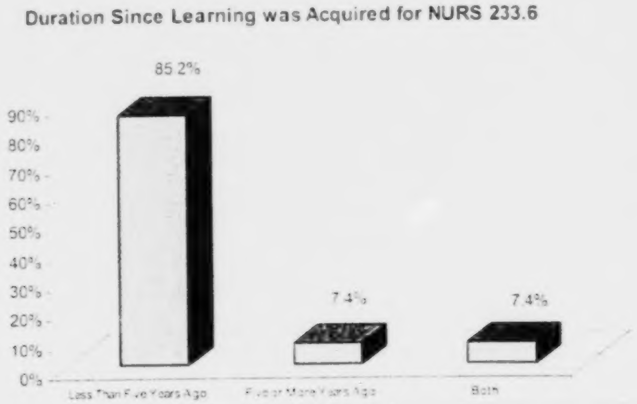
Thirteen percent of students (13% or 29 of 224) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 233.6. Of these, 10% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 3% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=224

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

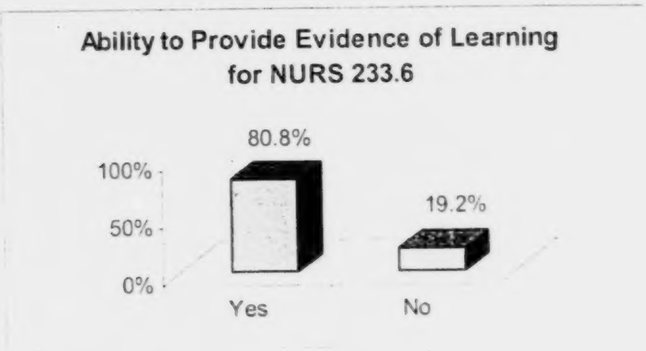
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 233.6 (85% or 23 of 27) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 7% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=27

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

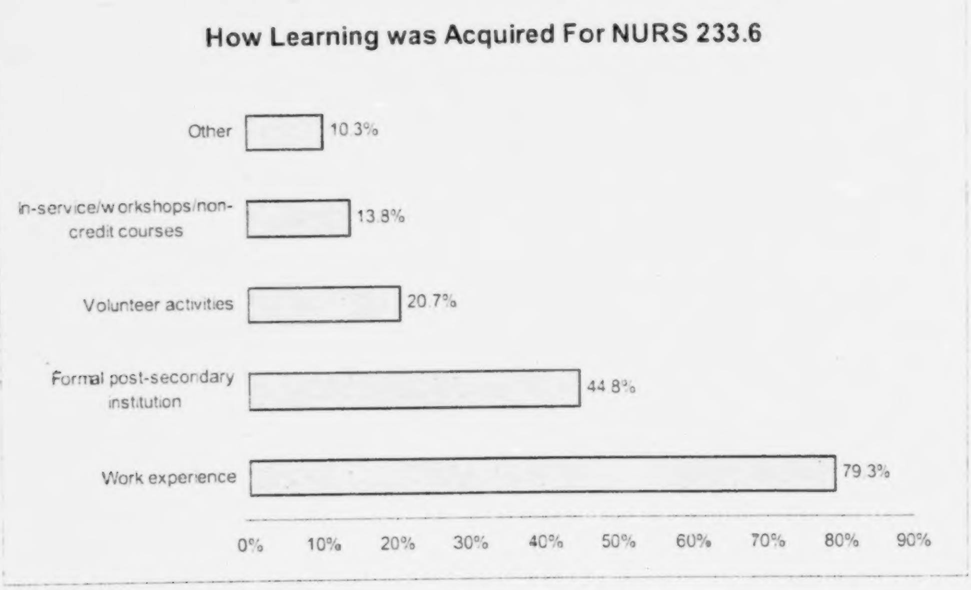
The majority of these students (81% or 21 of 26) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=26

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of these students (79%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through work experience. Nearly half of the students (45%) responded that their prior learning had come from formal post-secondary education, while one-fifth (20%) indicated their learning had been obtained through volunteer activities.


How Learning was Acquired For NURS 233.6

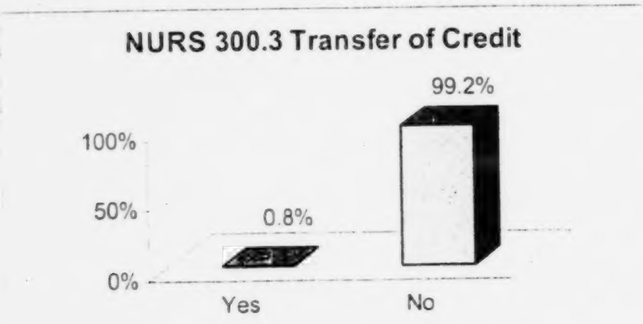
n=29
tr=49

## 3.3 NURSING 300 LEVEL COURSES

### 3.3.1 NURS 300.3 – Health Challenges of Adults III: Theory

### Transfer of Credit

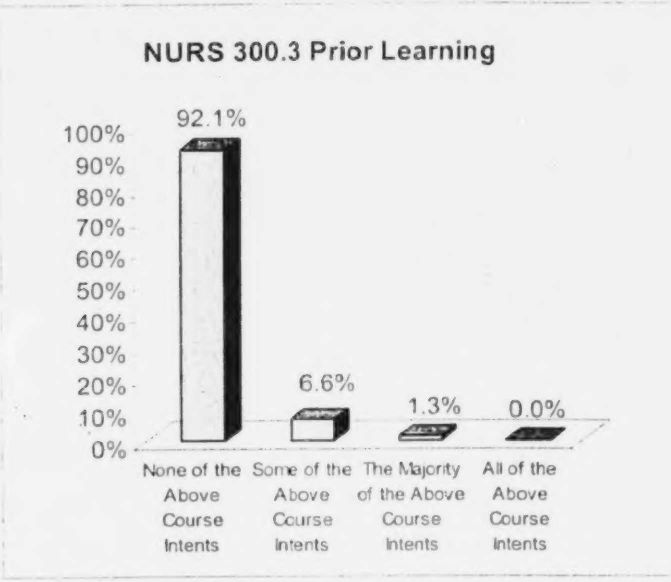
Only two students had received a transfer of credit for NURS 300.3.


NURS 300.3 Transfer of Credit

n=236

### Level of Prior Learning

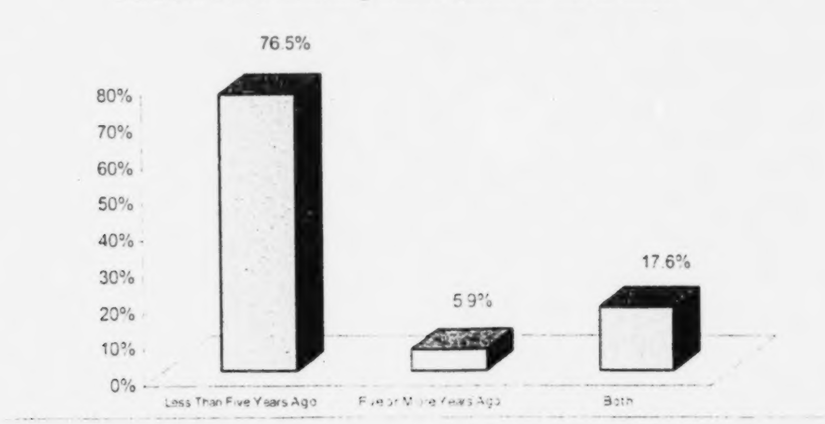
Eight percent of students (8% or 18 of 228) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 300.3. Of these, 7% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 1% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.


NURS 300.3 Prior Learning

n=228

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

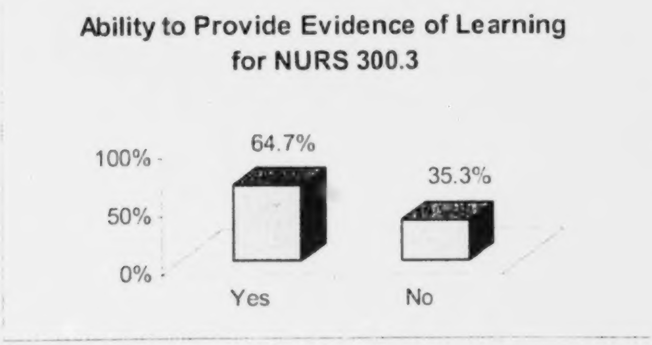
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 300.3 (77% or 13 of 17) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 18% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.


Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 300.3

n=17

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

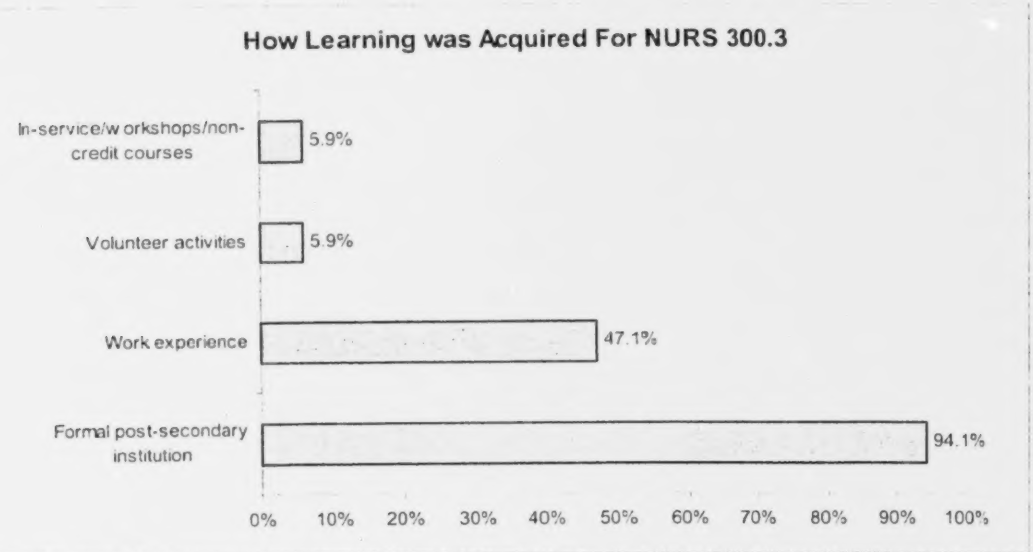
Nearly two-thirds of these students (65% or 11 of 17) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.


Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 300.3

n=17

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of these students (94%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through formal post-secondary institution. Nearly, one-half of the students (47%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience.

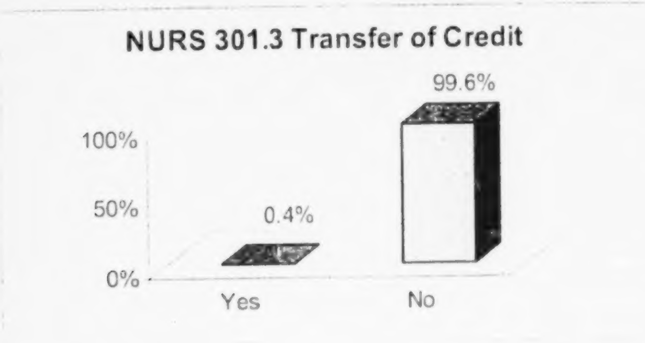

How Learning was Acquired For NURS 300.3

n=17
tr=26

### 3.3.2 NURS 301.3 – Health Challenges of Adults III: Clinical

**Transfer of Credit**

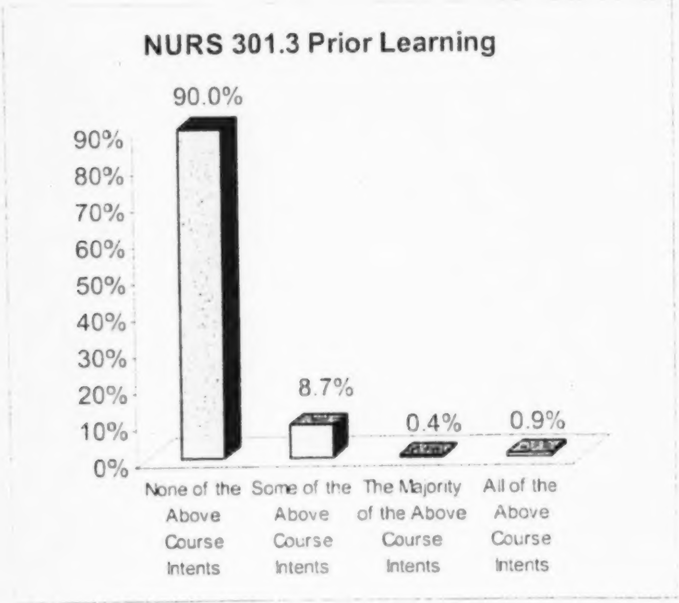
Only one student has received a transfer of credit for NURS 301.3.



n=237

**Level of Prior Learning**

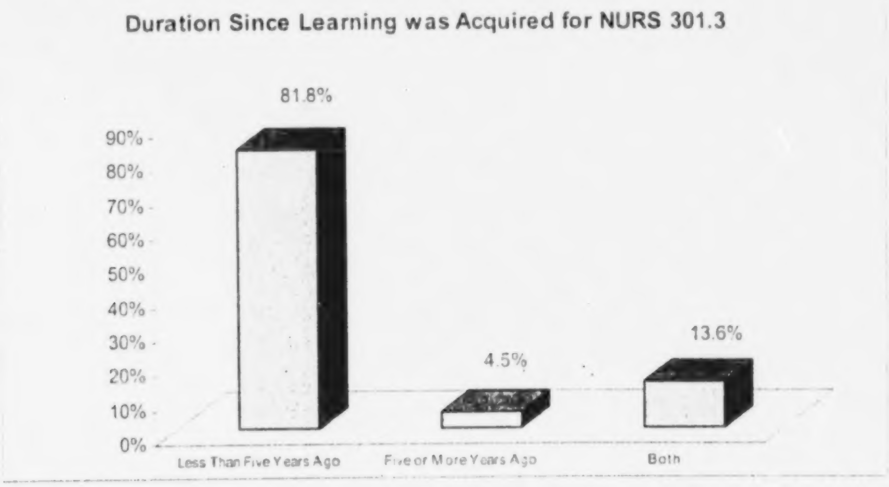
Ten percent of students (10% or 23 of 229) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 301.3. Of these, 9% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 1% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=229

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

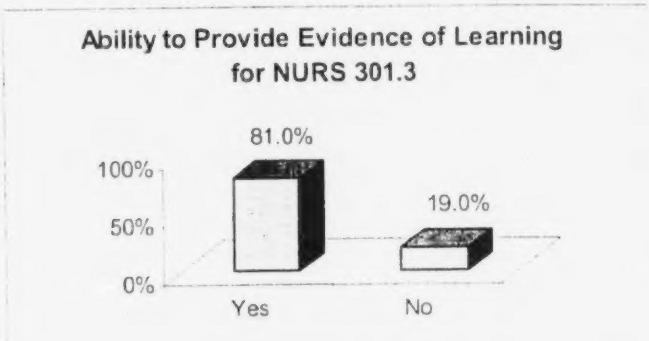
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 301.3 (82% or 18 of 22) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 14% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=22

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

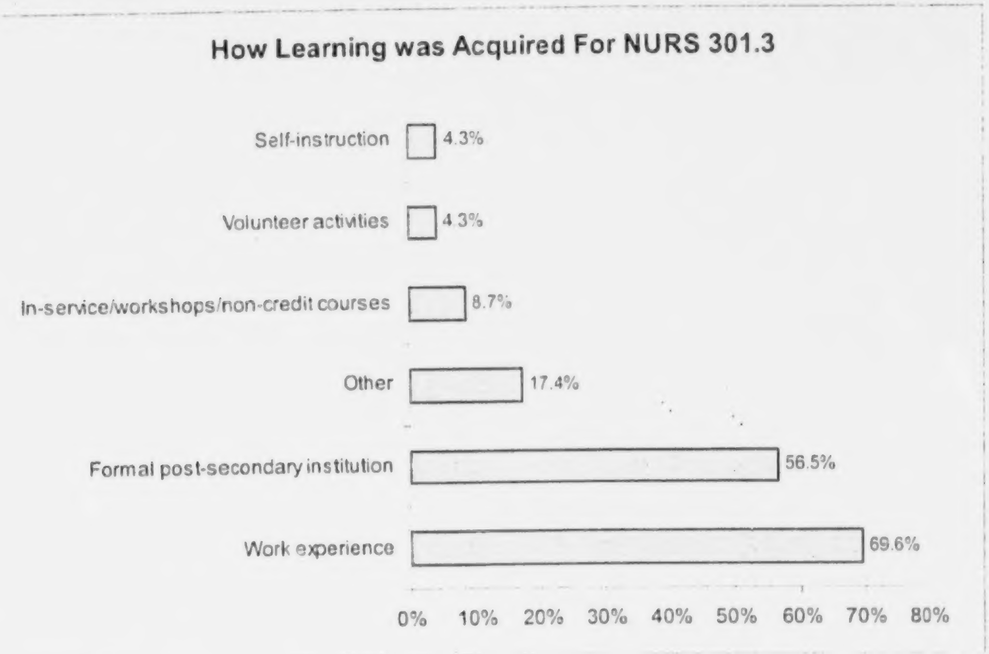
The majority of these students (81% or 17 of 21) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=21

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of these students (70%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through work experience. Over half of the students (57%) responded that their prior learning had come from formal post-secondary education, while almost one-fifth (17%) indicated their learning had been obtained through other activities.

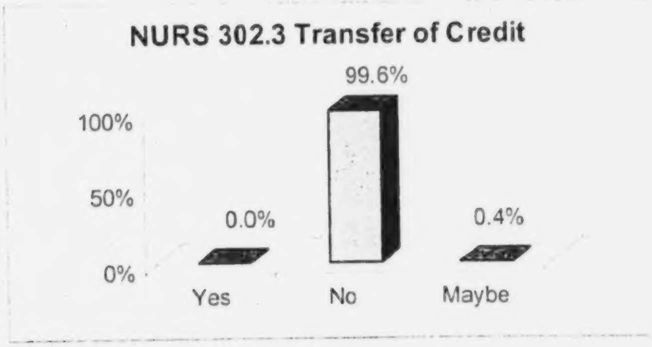


n=23
tr=37

## 3.3.3 NURS 302.3 – Health Challenges IV: Theory

### Transfer of Credit

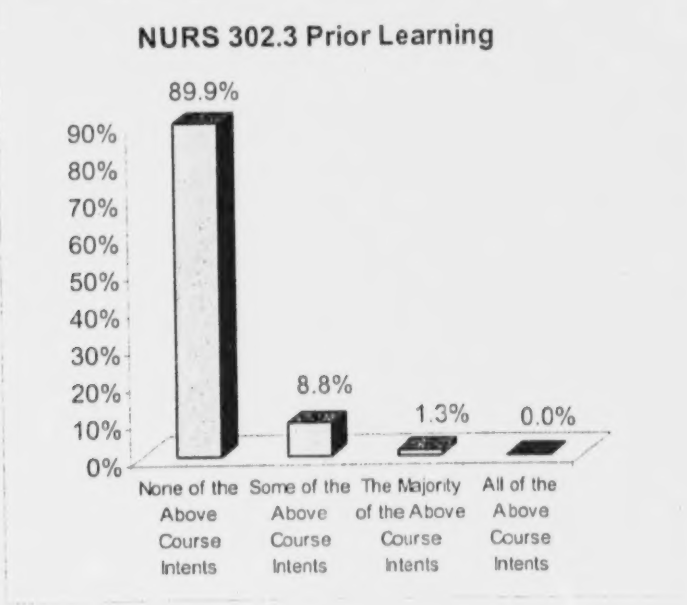
None of the students reported that they had received a transfer of credit for NURS 302.3. However, one individual that thought he/she may receive the credit, but had not heard yet.



n=236

### Level of Prior Learning

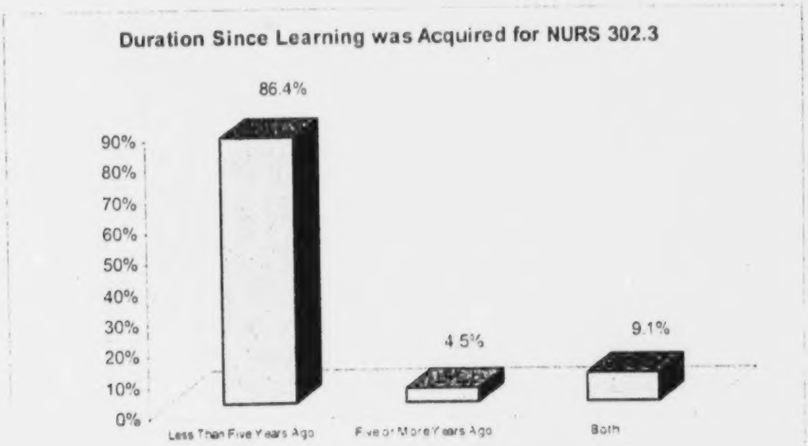
Ten percent of students (23 of 227) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 302.3. Of these, 9% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 1% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.


NURS 302.3 Prior Learning

n=227

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 302.3 (86% or 19 of 22) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 9% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.

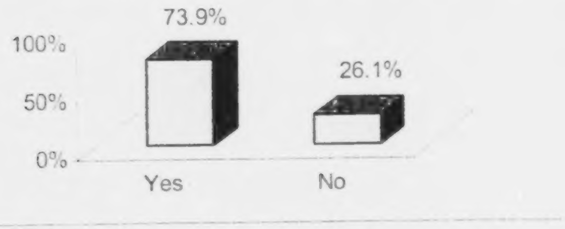

Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 302.3

n=22

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

Nearly three-quarters of these students (74% or 17 of 23) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

**Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 302.3**

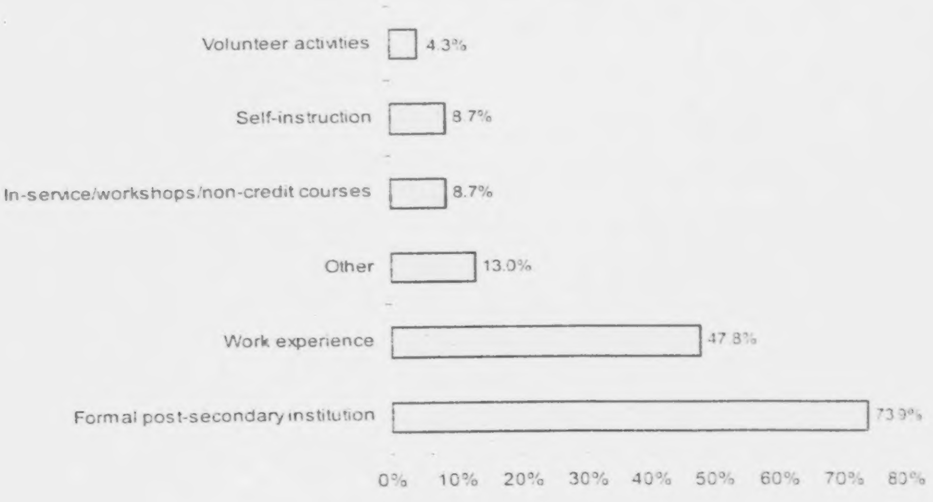


n=23

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of these students (79%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through formal post-secondary education. Nearly half of the students (48%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience, while only 13% indicated their learning had been obtained through other activities.

**How Learning was Acquired For NURS 302.3**

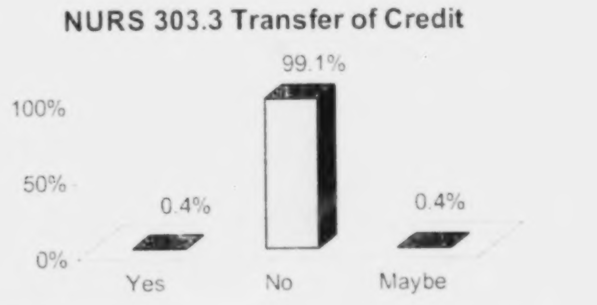


n=23
tr=36

### 3.3.4 NURS 303.3 – Health Challenges IV: Clinical

**Transfer of Credit**

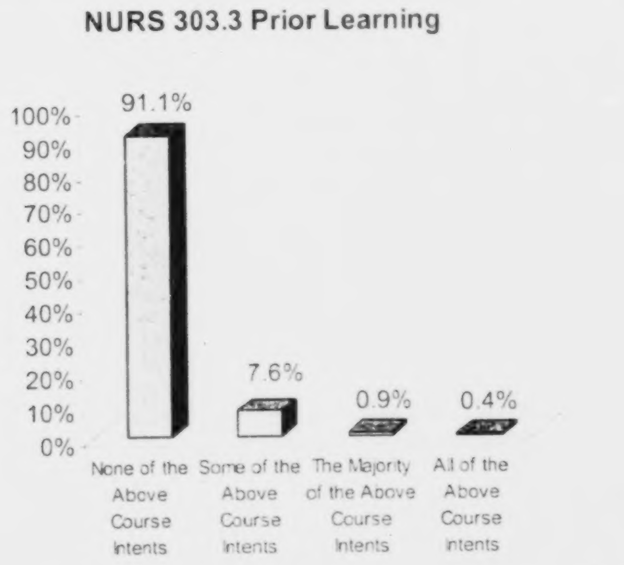
Only one student has received a transfer of credit for NURS 303.3. Another student reported that he/she may receive a credit, but had not heard back yet.



n=235

**Level of Prior Learning**

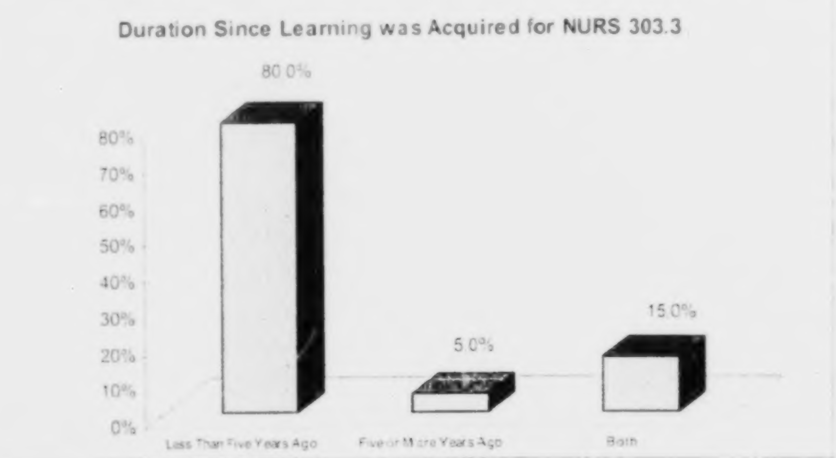
Nine percent of students (9% or 20 of 225) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 303.3. Of these, 8% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 1% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=225

## Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

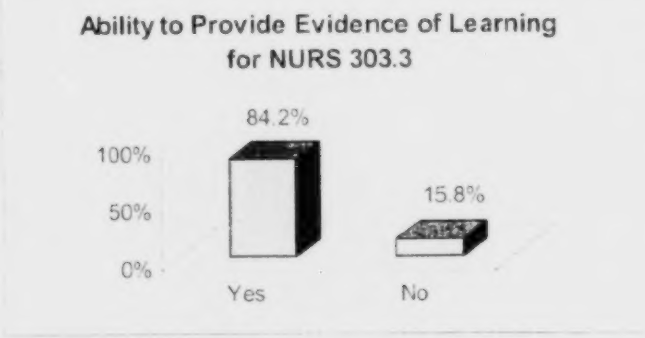
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 303.3 (80% or 16 of 20) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 7% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=20

## Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

The majority of these students (84% or 16 of 19) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

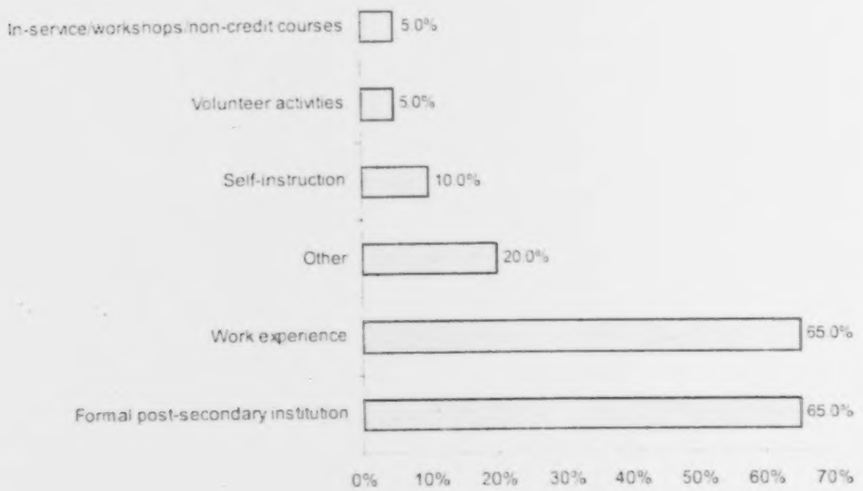


n=19

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

Nearly two-thirds of these students (65%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through work experience and formal post-secondary education. While one-fifth (20%) indicated their learning had been obtained through other activities.

How Learning was Acquired For NURS 303.3

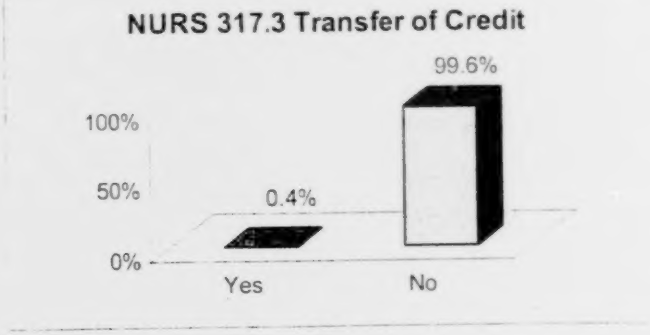


n=20
tr=34

### 3.3.5 NURS 317.3 – Family Diversity

#### Transfer of Credit

Only one student has received a transfer of credit for NURS 317.3.

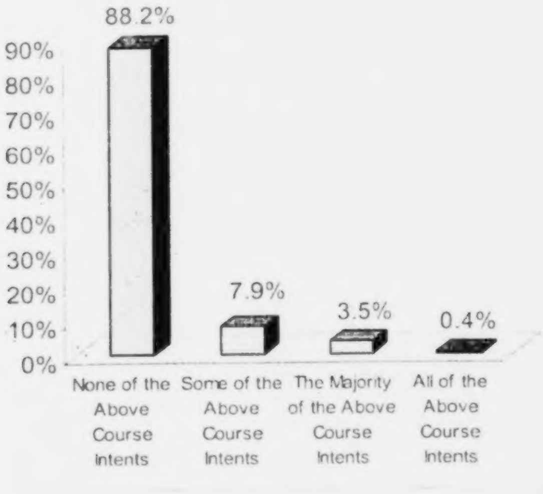


n=236

## Level of Prior Learning

Twelve percent of students (27 of 229) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 317.3. Of these, 8% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 4% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.

**NURS 317.3 Prior Learning**

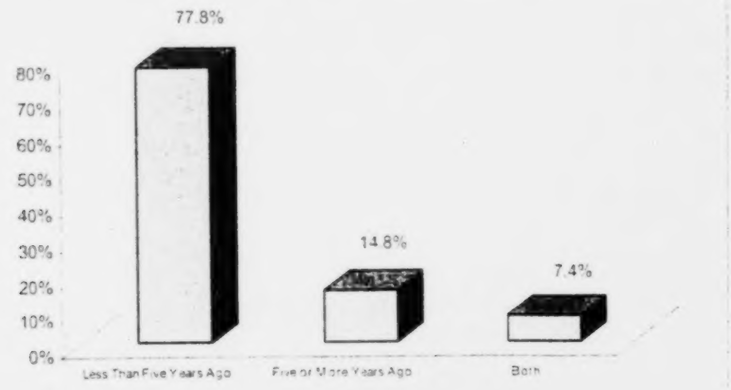


n=229

## Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 317.3 (79% or 21 of 27) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 7% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.

**Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 317.3**

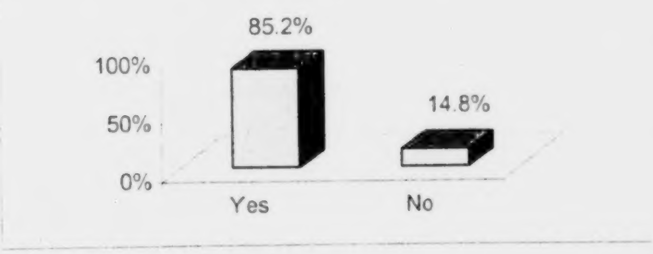


n=27

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

The majority of these students (85% or 23 of 27) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

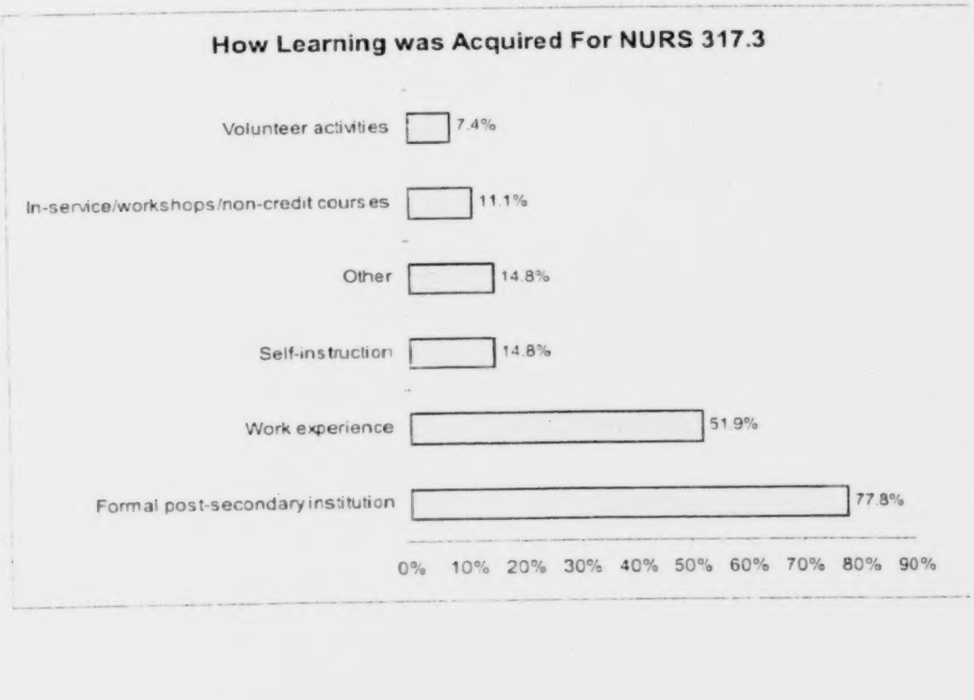
**Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 317.3**



n=27

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of these students (78%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through formal post-secondary education. Over half of the students (52%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience, while 20% indicated their learning had been obtained through self-instruction and other activities.

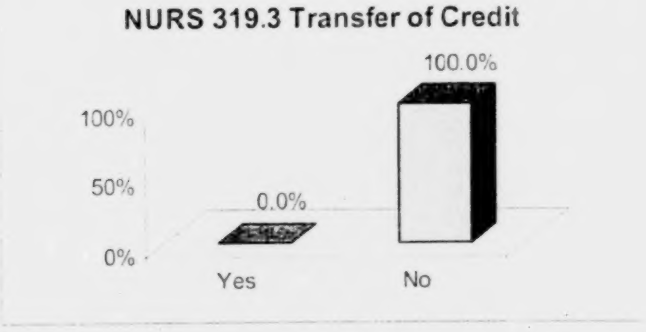


n=27
tr=48

### 3.3.6 NURS 319.3 – Issues in Nursing

**Transfer of Credit**

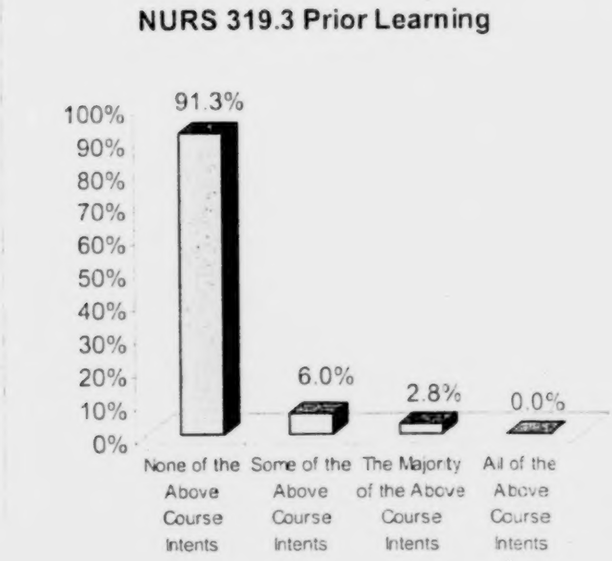
None of the students reported receiving a transfer of credit for NURS 319.3.



n=226

**Level of Prior Learning**

Nine percent of students (19 of 218) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 319.3. Of these, 6% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 3% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.

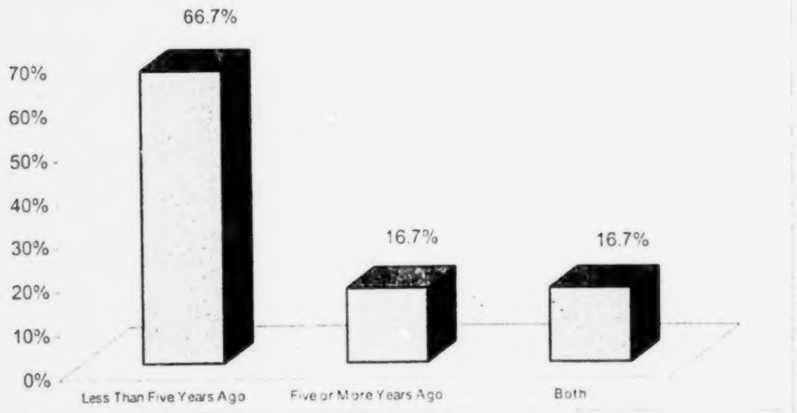


n=218

## Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

Two thirds of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 319.3 (67% or 12 of 18) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 17% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.

Duration Since Learning was Acquired for NURS 319.3

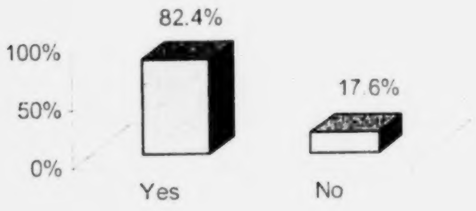


n=18

## Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

The majority of these students (82% or 14 of 17) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

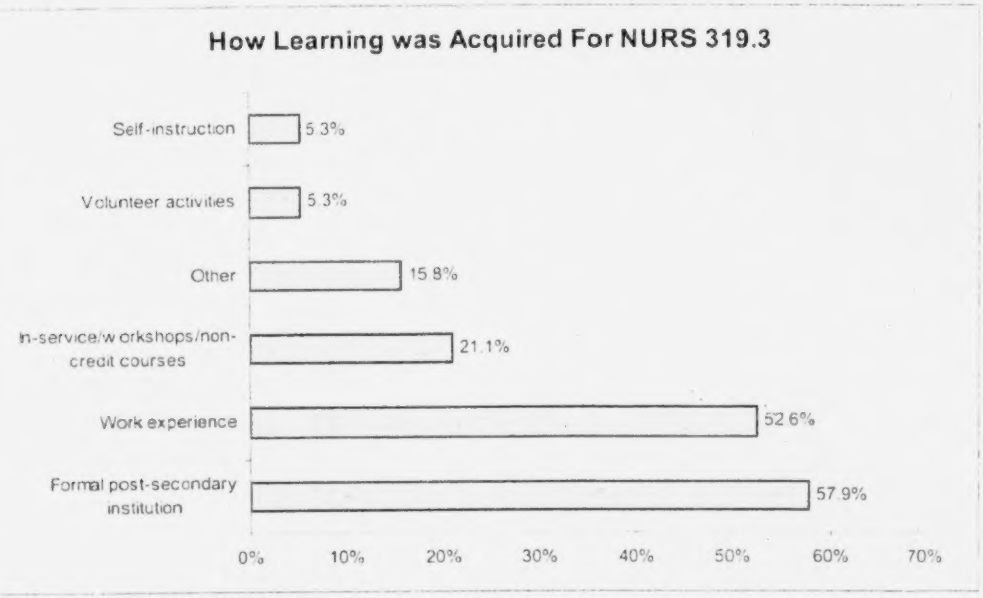
Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 319.3



n=17

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of these students (58%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through formal post-secondary education. Nearly half of the students (45%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience, while more than one-fifth (21%) indicated their learning had been obtained through In-service/workshops/non-credit courses.

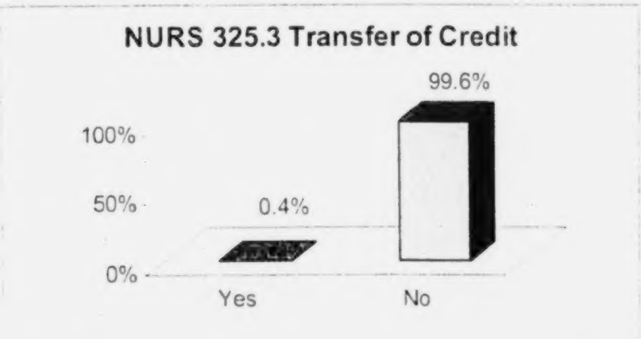


n=19
tr=30

### 3.3.7 NURS 325.3 – Practice in Communities

#### Transfer of Credit

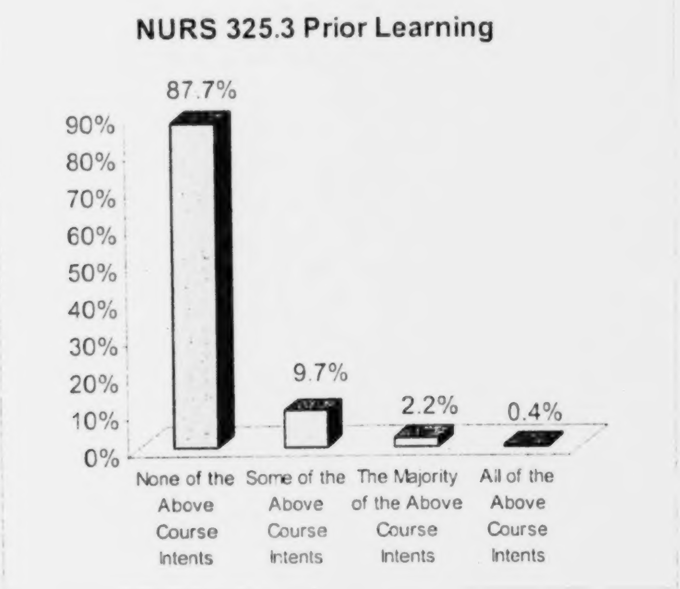
Only one student has received a transfer of credit for NURS 325.3.



n=235

### Level of Prior Learning

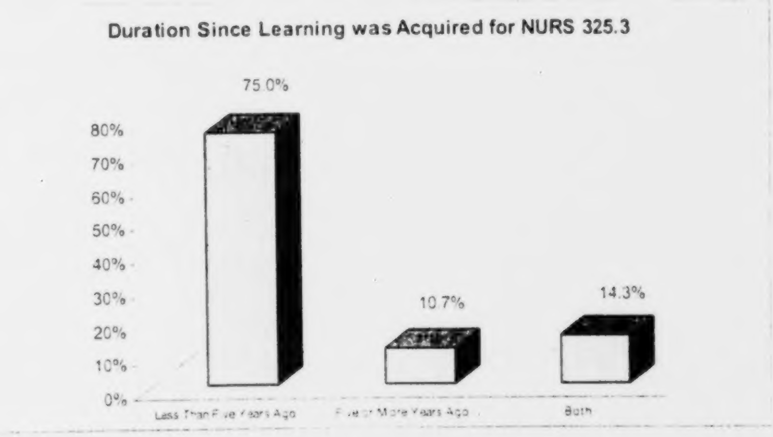
Twelve percent of students (28 of 227) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 325.3. Of these, 10% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 2% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=227

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

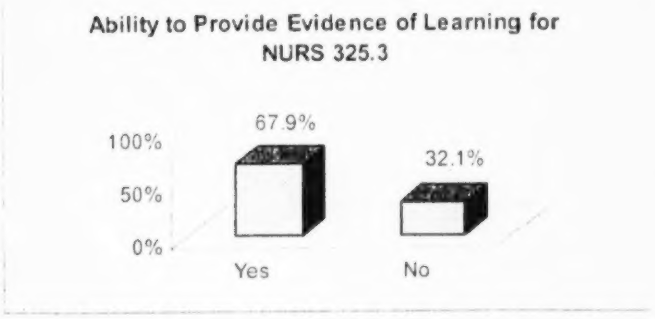
Three-quarters of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 325.3 (75% or 21 of 28) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 14% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=28

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

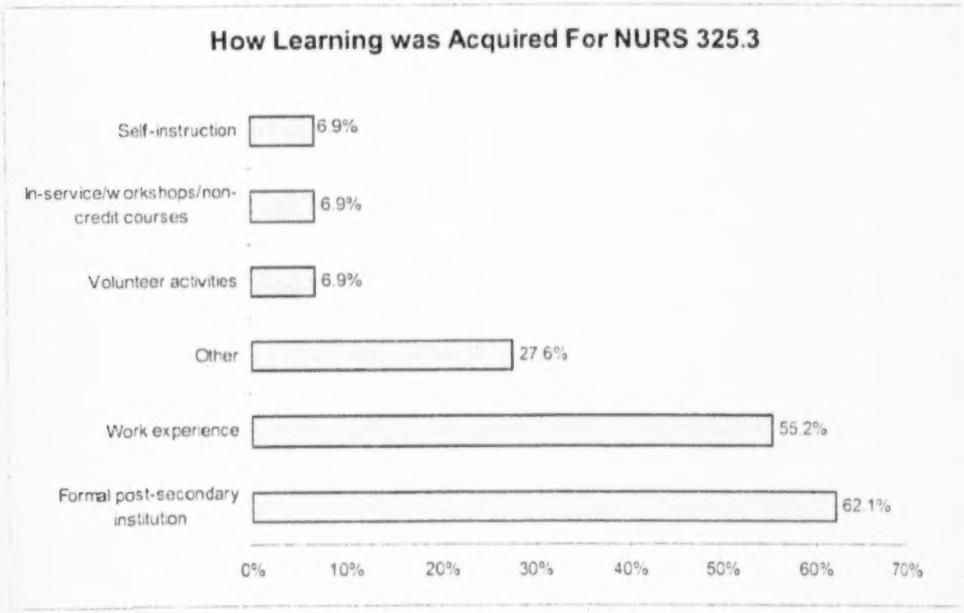
The majority of these students (68% or 19 of 28) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.


**Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning for NURS 325.3**

n=28

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

Nearly two-thirds of these students (62%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through formal post-secondary education. More than half of the students (55%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience, while almost one-third (28%) indicated their learning had been obtained through other activities.

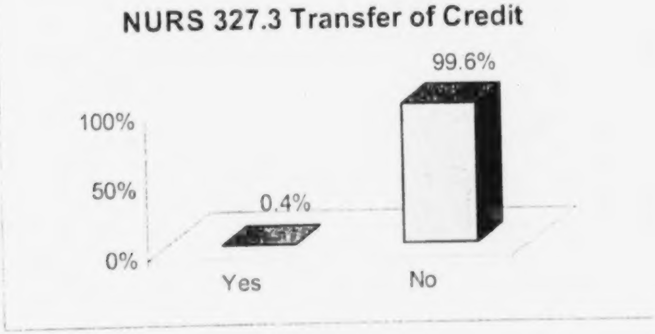

**How Learning was Acquired For NURS 325.3**

n=29
tr=48

### 3.3.7 NURS 327.3 – Participating With Groups

**Transfer of Credit**

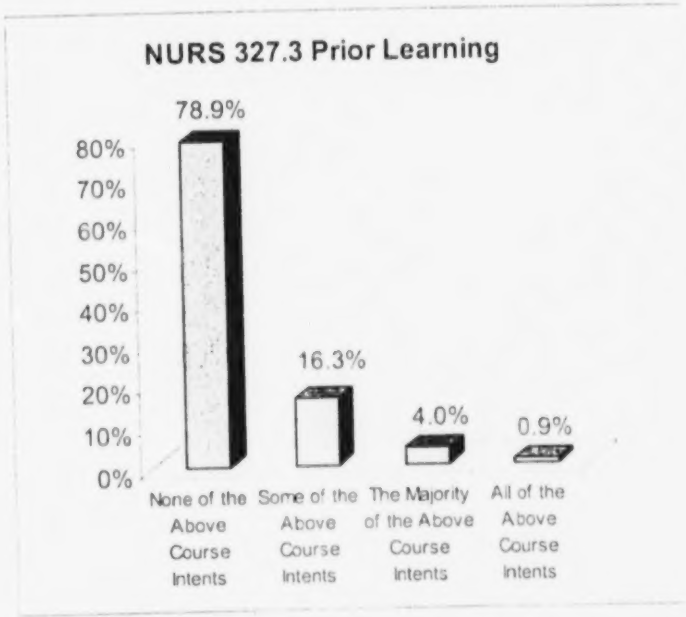
Only one student has received a transfer of credit for NURS 327.3.



n=236

**Level of Prior Learning**

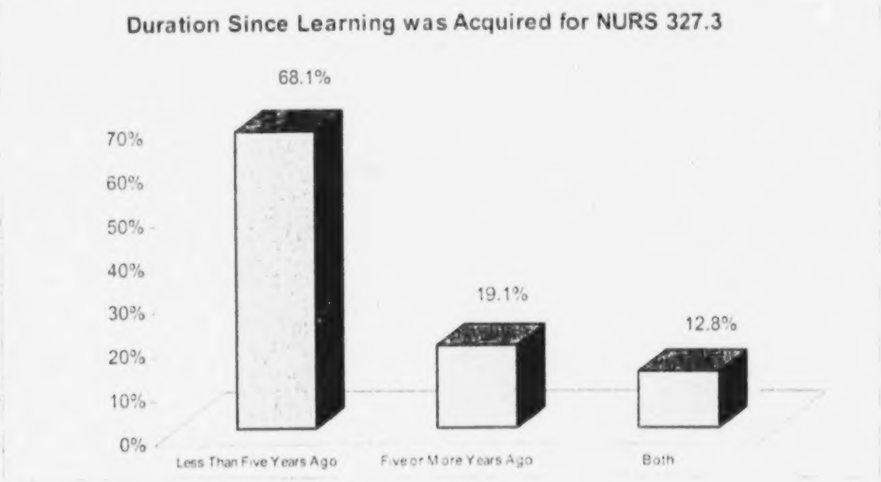
One-fifth of students (21% or 48 of 227) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 327.3. Of these, 16% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 5% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=227

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

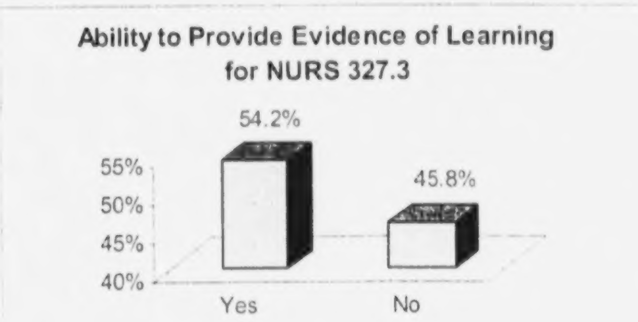
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 327.3 (68% or 32 of 47) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 13% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=47

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

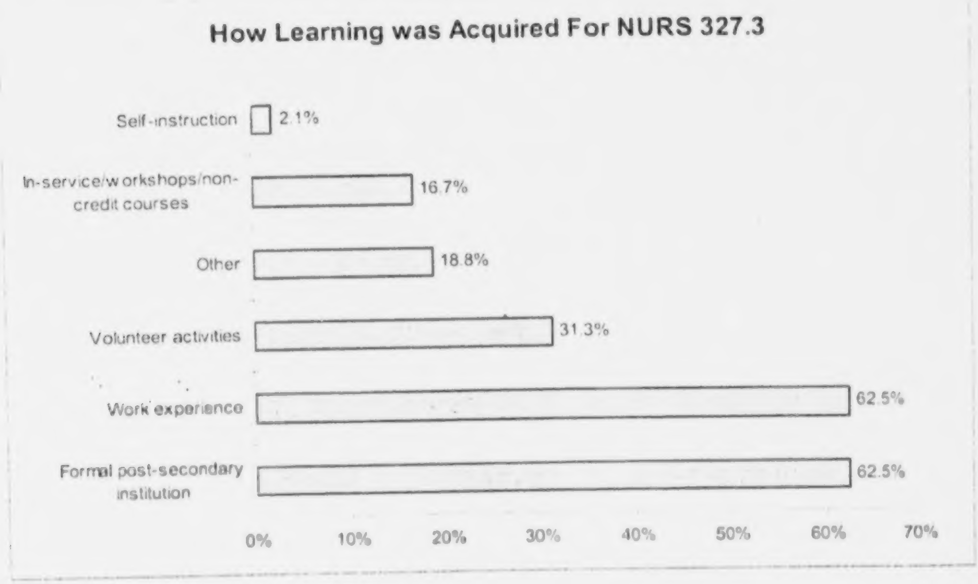
More than half of these students (54% or 26 of 48) felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=48

**How Prior Learning was Acquired**

The majority of these students (63%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through both work experience and formal post-secondary education. More than one-third of the students (31%) responded that their prior learning had come from volunteer activities, while almost one-fifth (19%) indicated their learning had been obtained through other means.



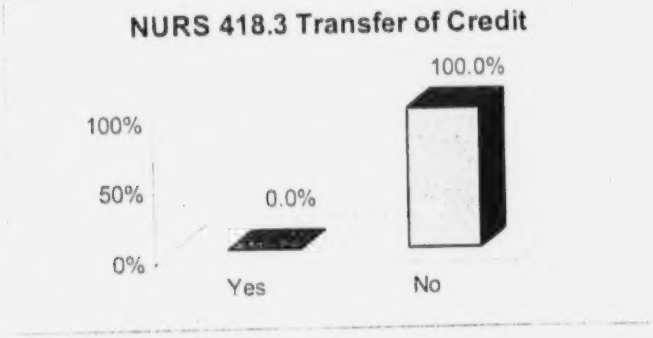
n=48
tr=93

### 3.4 NURSING 400 LEVEL COURSES

### 3.4.1 NURS 418.3 – Management in Health Systems

**Transfer of Credit**

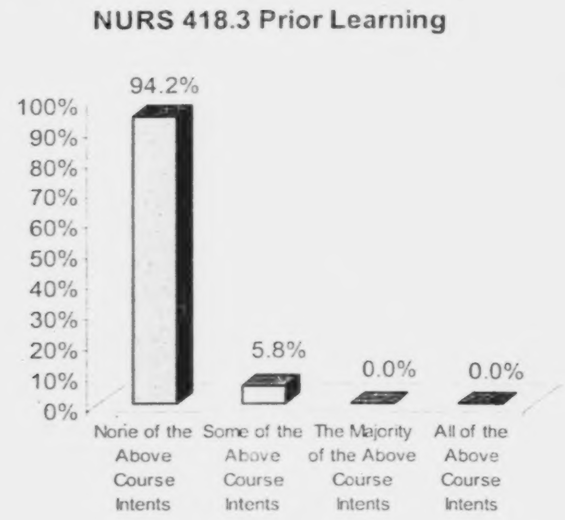
None of the students reported receiving a transfer of credit for NURS 418.3.



n=217

### Level of Prior Learning

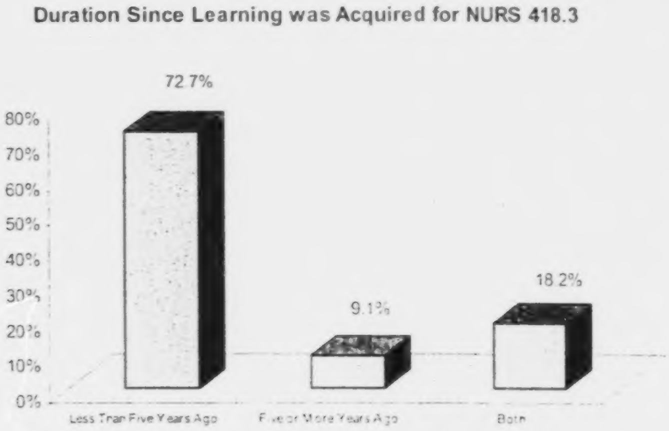
Six percent of students (12 of 208) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 418.3. Of these, the entire 6% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents. No one felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=208

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

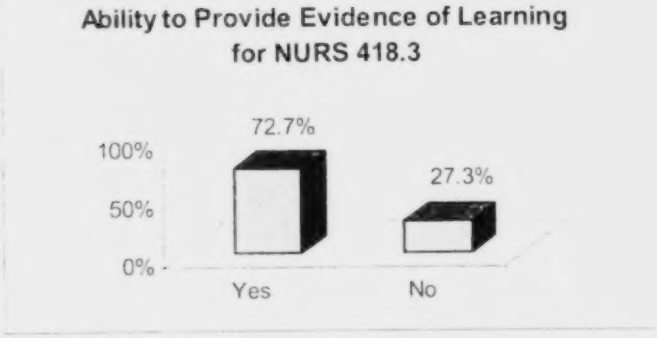
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 418.3 (73% or 8 of 11) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 18% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=11

## Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

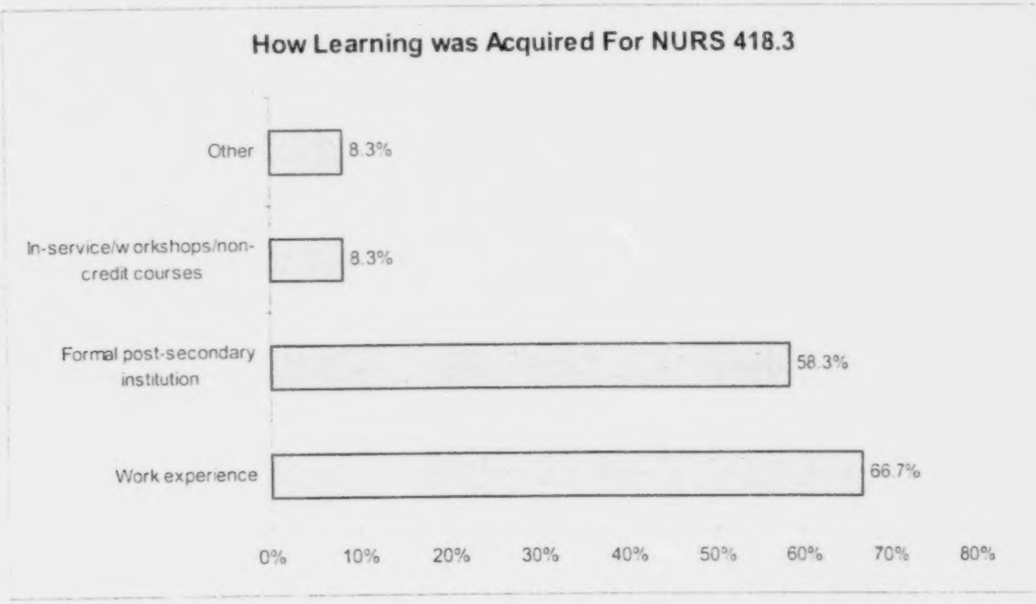
The majority of these students (73% or 8 of 11) felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=11

## How Prior Learning was Acquired

Over two-thirds of these students (67%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through work experience. More than half of the students (58%) responded that their prior learning had come from formal post-secondary education.



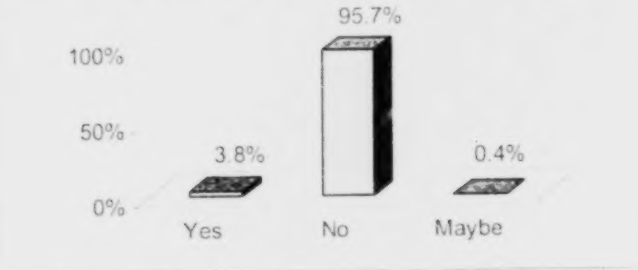
n=12
tr=17

### 3.4.2 NURS 419.3 – Research for Professional Practice

**Transfer of Credit**

Nearly four percent of students (9 of 234) had received a transfer of credit for NURS 419.3.

NURS 419.3 Transfer of Credit

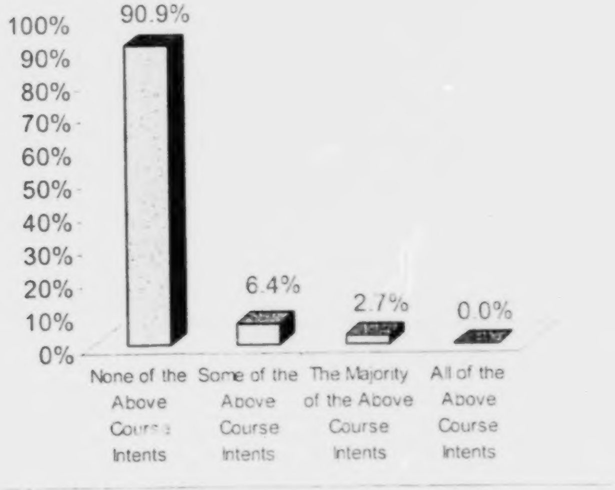


n=234

**Level of Prior Learning**

Nine percent of students (20 of 219) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 419.3. Of these, 6% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 3% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.

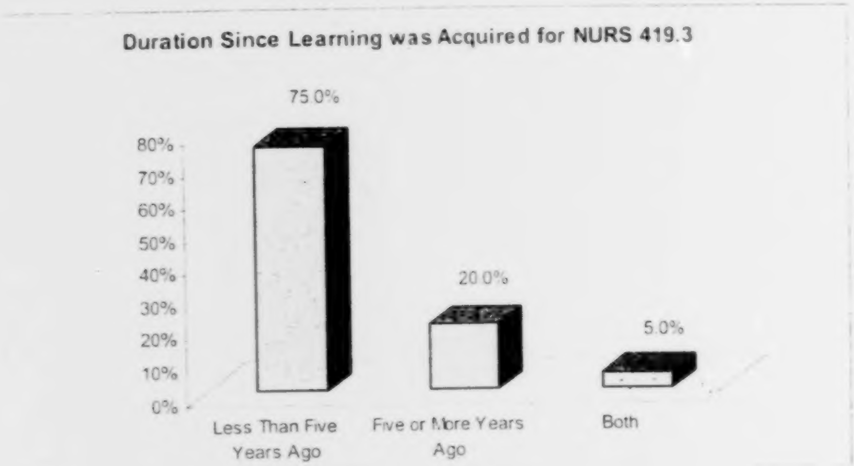
NURS 419.3 Prior Learning



n=219

## Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

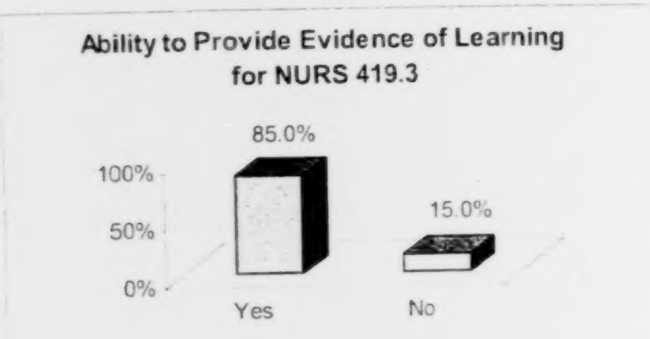
Three-quarters of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 419.3 (75% or 15 of 20) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 5% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=20

## Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

The majority of these students (85% or 17 of 20) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.

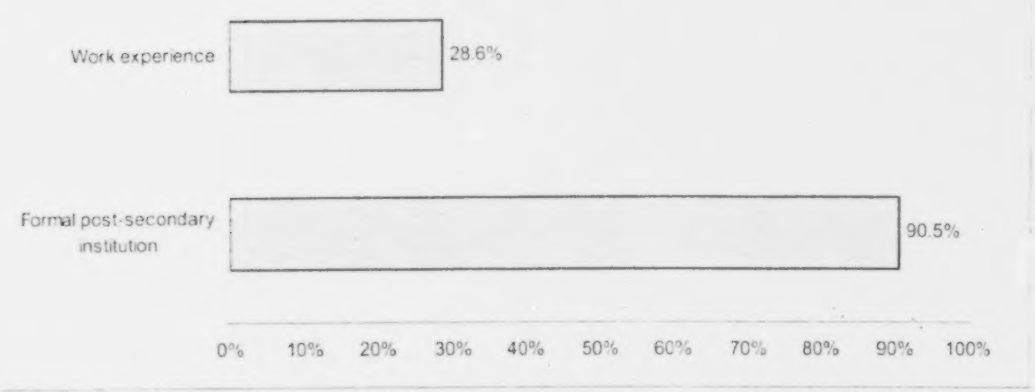


n=20

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

The majority of these students (76%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through formal post-secondary education. Nearly one third of the students (29%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience.

How Learning was Acquired For NURS 419.3



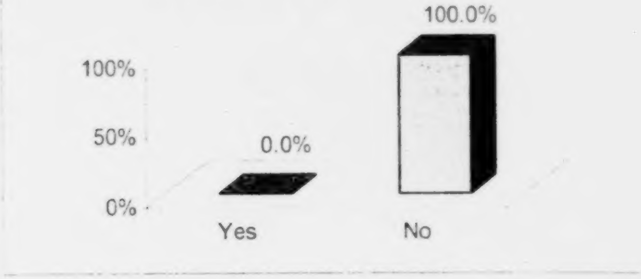
n=21
tr=25

### 3.4.3 NURS 420.3 – Partnerships With Community

### Transfer of Credit

None of the students reported receiving a transfer of credit for NURS 420.3.

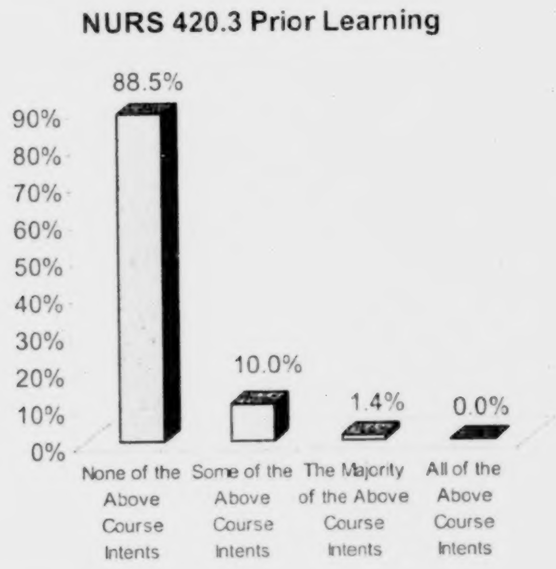
NURS 420.3 Transfer of Credit



n=220

### Level of Prior Learning

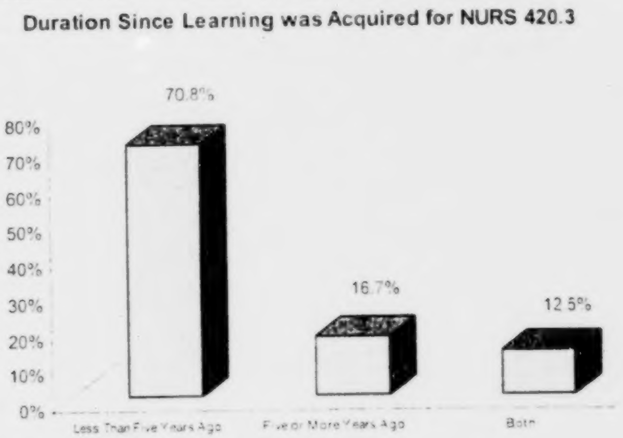
Eleven percent of students (24 of 209) felt that they had prior learning for NURS 420.3. Of these, 10% perceived they had prior learning that meets some of the above course intents, and the remaining 1% felt they could meet the majority or all of the above course intents.



n=209

### Duration Since Learning Was Acquired

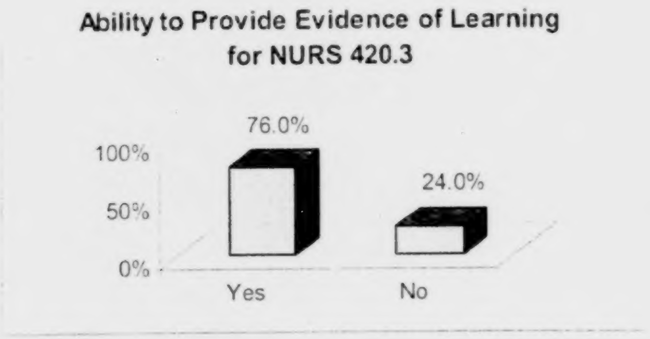
The majority of students who indicated they had prior learning for NURS 420.3 (71% or 17 of 24) felt that their learning was more current, being acquired less than five years ago. Another 13% of students indicated that some of their prior learning had been acquired less than five years ago, while the remainder had been learned five or more years ago.



n=24

### Ability to Provide Evidence of Learning

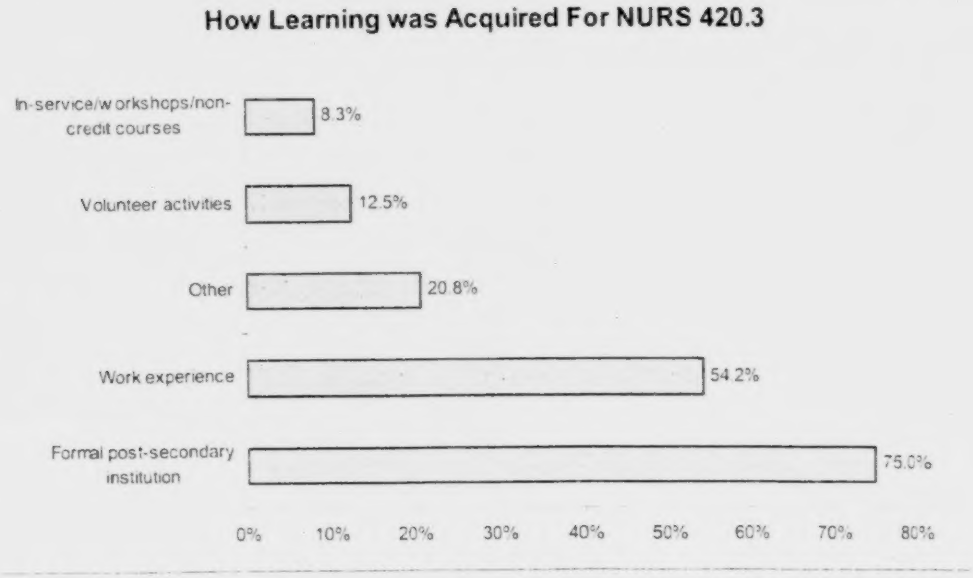
The majority of these students (76% or 19 of 25) also felt they could provide evidence of this learning.



n=25

### How Prior Learning was Acquired

Three quarters of these students (75%) indicated they had acquired their prior learning through formal post-secondary education. Over half of the students (54%) responded that their prior learning had come from work experience, while one-fifth (20%) indicated their learning had been obtained through other means.



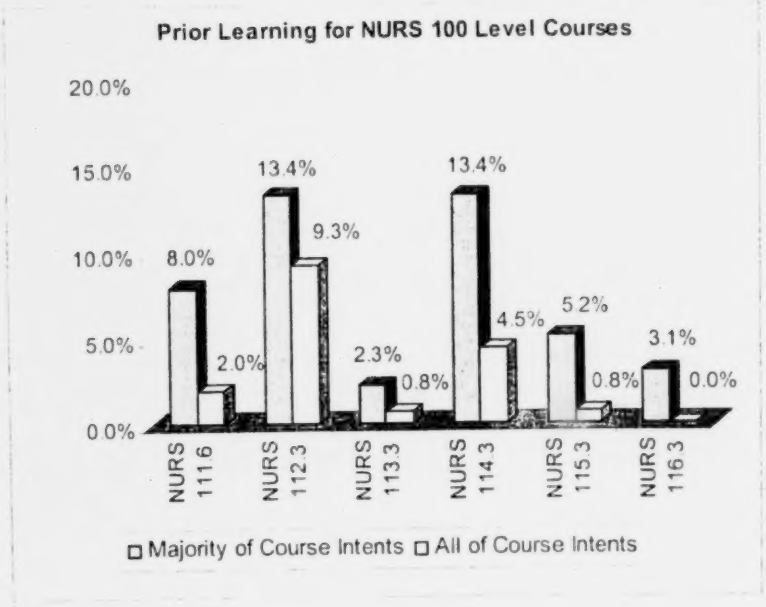
n=24
tr=41

## 3.5 Level of Prior Learning Amongst Courses in Each Year

### 3.5.1 Comparison of the Level of Prior Learning in Nursing 100 Level Courses

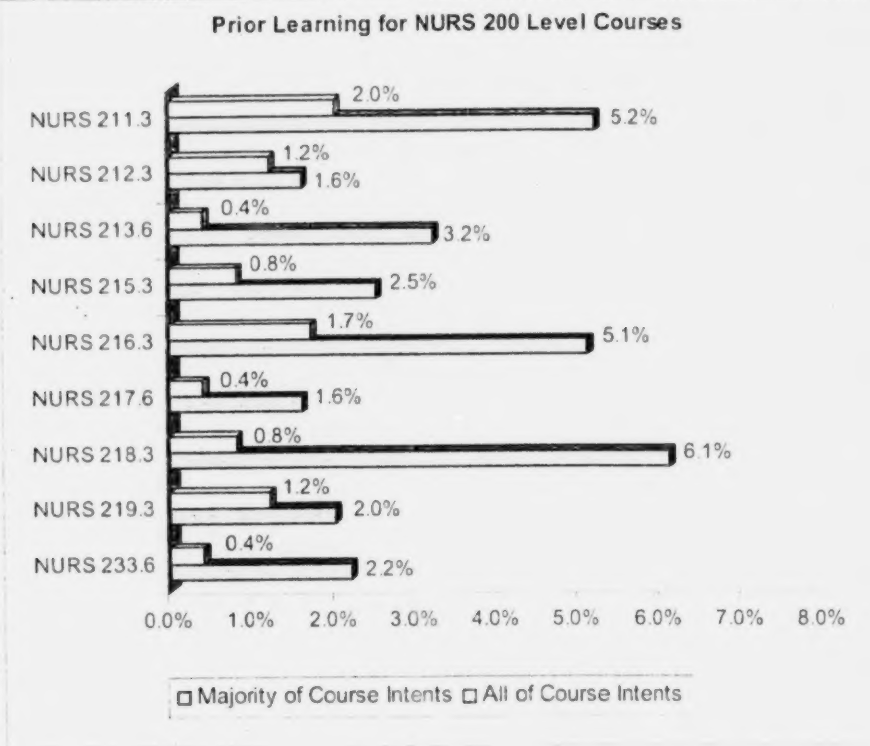
Nursing 112.3 Development of Self and Nursing 114.3 Interpersonal Relationships had the largest proportion of students indicating that they had prior learning that meets the majority or all of the course intents for Nursing 100 level courses. Of the students who indicated they had prior learning for both Nursing 112.3 and Nursing 114.3, 13.4% felt they previously had the knowledge and skills to meet the majority of the course intents. Nine percent of students felt they had prior learning that meets all of the course intents for Nursing 112.3, while one-half of this proportion (4.5%) indicated they could meet all the intents for Nursing 114.3.

Note: A list of current course offerings by course number and name is provided in Appendix D.



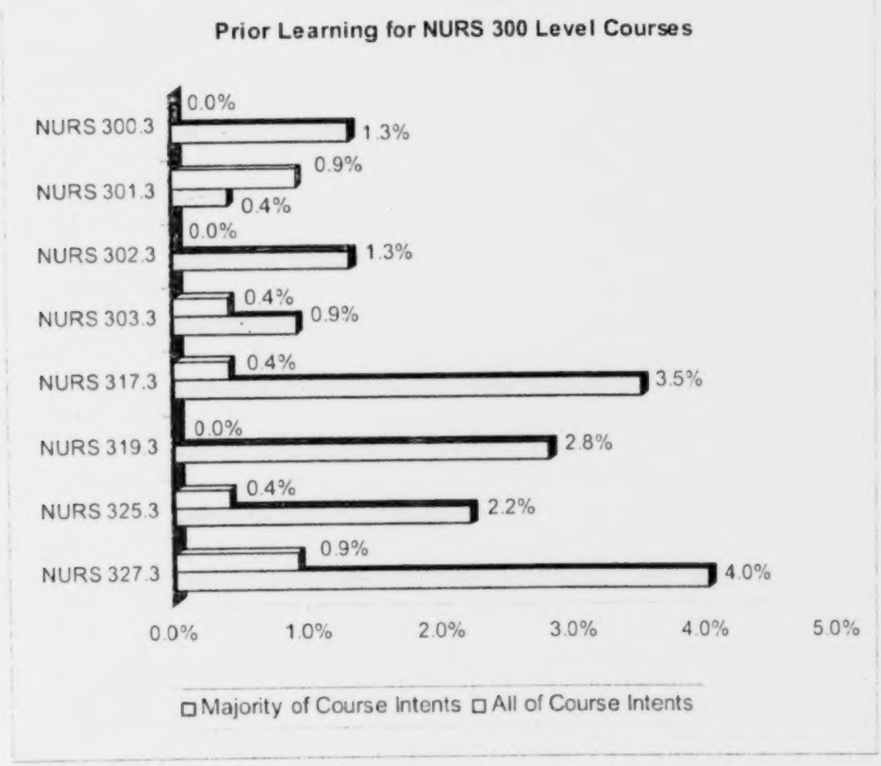
### 3.5.2 Comparison of the Level of Prior Learning in Nursing 200 Level Courses

Nursing 211.3 Counseling in Nursing Practice (5%), Nursing 216.3 Healthy Growth and Development, and Nursing 218.3 Education for Health (6%) were the courses that had the largest proportion of students stating they had prior learning that meets the majority of the course intents. Nursing 211.3 (2%) and Nursing 216.3 (1.7%) also had the largest number of students that felt their level of prior learning meets all of the course intents.



### 3.5.3 Comparison of the Level of Prior Learning in Nursing 300 Level Courses

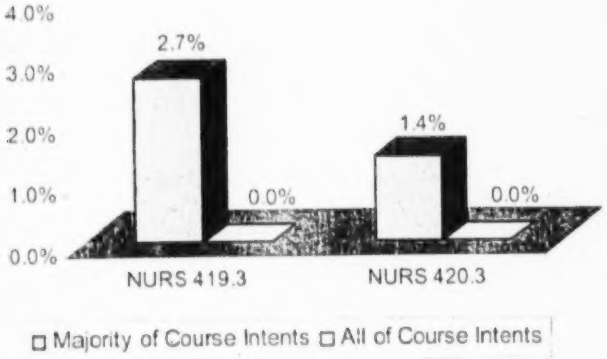
Nursing 327.3 Participating With Groups (4% of students) and Nursing 317.3 Family Diversity (3.5% of students) had the largest proportion of students that felt they had prior learning that meets the majority of the respective course intents. There were fewer students who felt they could meet all of the course intents for 300 level courses. Nursing 301.3 Health Challenges of Adults III: Clinical and Nursing (.9%) and 327.3 Participating With Groups (.9%) each had a couple of students that felt they had prior learning that meets all of the course intents.



### 3.5.4 Comparison of the Level of Prior Learning in Nursing 400 Level Courses

Only a few students felt they could meet the majority of the intents for the 400 level nursing courses through prior learning. No one reported that they could meet all of the learning intents.

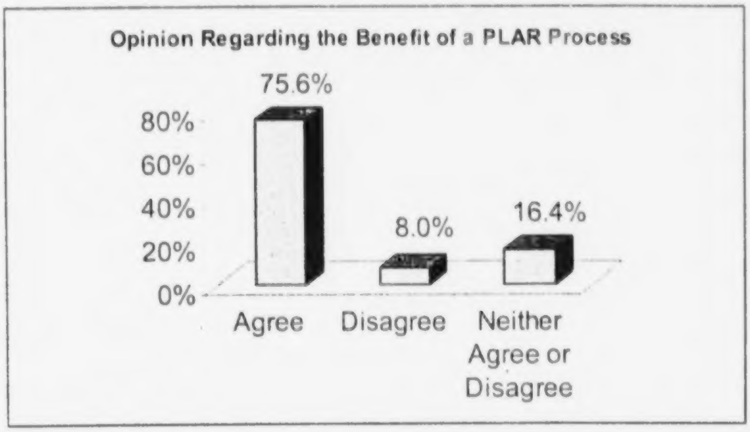
Prior Learning for NURS 400 Level Courses



## 4. Opinions Regarding Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

### 4.1 Opinion Regarding the Benefit of a PLAR Process

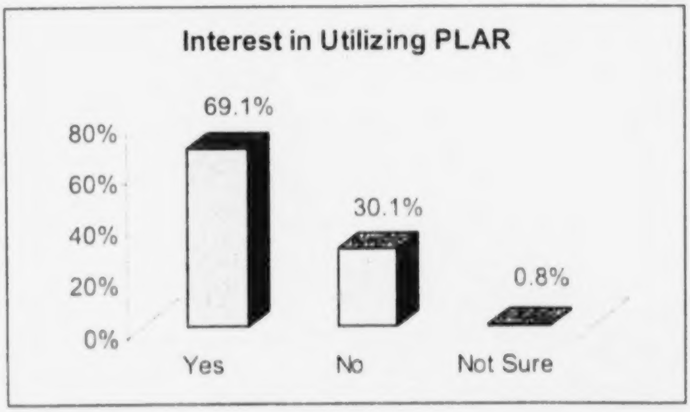
Three quarters of the student participants (75.6% or 198 of 262) felt that undergoing a PLAR process would be a worthwhile exercise to undertake regardless of the risk that they may not be awarded credit for the course being challenged.



n=262

### 4.2 Students' Interest in Utilizing PLAR

A slightly smaller proportion of students (69%) responded that they would be interested in utilizing a PLAR process if one was offered by the NEPS. The decrease in the number of students who would actually use PLAR is explained in part by those students who do not had any prior learning experience, but who recognize the benefit this process could provide to their peers that do had prior learning. For this reason, they agreed that PLAR was a worthwhile exercise to undertake, but answered no when they were asked if they would be personally interested in utilizing PLAR.



n=259

## APPENDIX A

### OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

*Section 1*

**Question 1.4 Highest Level of Formal Education:**

**Q 1.4a - Some College/Technical School**

- UofR Pre-journalism/SIAST Business
- Some courses from SAIT
- SIAST LPN
- SIAST Licensed Practical Nurse Program and 1 year Arts and Science for University Level classes needed for Nursing
- SIAST Kelsey - Early Childhood Education Certificate
- SIAST - Office Education, Medical Specialty and Computer Specialty
- SIAST - Kelsey, Rehabilitation Worker Certificate
- Office Education Certificate
- Office Education
- Office Education - SIAST
- General Arts
- EMT
- Early Childhood Education, SIAST
- Diploma Nursing at Kelsey in 1993
- College of Commerce - 1st year
- Certificate SCA/HHA SIAST
- Certificate in Biblical Studies at FGBI
- Bible School
- Bible College (accredited)
- Accounting
- 3 years at UofR
- 2.5 years of 3 year Nursing Program
- 1.5 years of Architecture and Building Tech at SIAST Palliser
- 1 year diploma @ bible school
- 1 year Bible school
- 1 year at Bible college

**Question 1.4b – College/Technical School Graduate**

- South East Regional College SCA/Home Care certificate
- SIAST EMT
- SIAST EMT
- SIAST Certified Dental Assisting
- SBC, PIMT
- Saskatoon Business College - Business Administration
- Recreation and Leisure Diploma SIAST
- Practical Nursing
- Physio Assistant Program

- OTPS/PTA
- On the job HCA/SCA through SIAST, 2 yr Diploma in Western Horsemanship Program, Lakeland College
- Office Education, Medical Terminology
- Office Education Certificate
- Northlands College/SIAST Woodlands - LPN certificate
- LPN Program at SIAST
- LPN
- LPN - SIAST Wascana
- LPN - SIAST
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Kelsey - Certified Combined Technician and CDI College Business Administration
- Hotel/Restaurant Admin, SIAST
- Home Care/Special Care Aide Program
- Health Related Course
- Finance Diploma
- EMT
- EMT
- EMT
- EMT-B @ SIAST
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Dental Hygiene
- Dental Assistant and Business Admin Assistant
- Cosmetology
- Certificate of Christian Studies, PRBI - Alberta
- Capernerray Bible School
- BCIT-Broadcast Journalism
- Bachelor of Theology
- Administrative Assistant
- Accounting Diploma from SIAST
- 2 year diploma occupational health
- 2 Year certificate/associate degree
- 1 year of pre-med at UofR
- 1 year certificate
- 1 year Bible college

**Question 1.4c – Some University**

- Year 1 of Arts and Science at UofS
- Year 1 Arts and Science
- Was in faculty of science for 2 years
- Various classes
- UofS, Arts and Sciences
- UofS, 2 years of Arts and Science
- UofS Arts and Science
- UofS 2 years
- UofR Education
- UofR - Arts

- UofR
- UofS, Department of Anatomy
- UofS
- University of Calgary - Accounting/Marketing
- Undergraduate studies in Arts & Science
- UofS (1.5 years of classes)
- Two years Arts & Science
- Took my electives at the UofR
- Statistics, Anthropology, English
- Some university classes
- Sociology 100, English 100, Statistics 151, Women Studies 100, Psychology 100, Geography 100
- Social Sciences, Stats, and Elective for NEPS
- Social science, science
- Select classes in Arts
- Sciences
- Science SFU
- Psychology 110, Sociology 110, English 110, Native Studies 110
- Psychology 100
- Psychology
- Psych class and computer
- Pre-physiotherapy, 1 year
- Pre-pharmacy at UofS for 2 years
- One year of Arts and Science
- One year of Arts and Science
- Non-Nursing credited classes
- Human Justice
- English 100, Psychology 100, Music App 101
- English 100, Psychology 100, Native Studies, Statistics 151
- Currently working on degree on Anthropology applied
- Completed 2 years Arts and Science prior to.
- Classes needed for nursing degree
- Classes for nursing
- Attended Minot State University (Physical Education), UofS Arts and Science
- Arts/pre-studies
- Arts at UofS
- Arts and Sciences
- Arts and Science courses for 2.5 years
- Arts and Science
- Arts and Science
- Arts and Science - 2 years at UofS
- Arts and Science at Red Deere College
- Approximately 10 classes at UofR
- All electives for Nursing
- A few UofR classes
- 4 years of Biology: 2 at Greenville College & 2 at U of S
- 4 nonnursing required courses
- 3 years psychology

- 3 years of UofS - major in physiology
- 3 years of sociology program
- 3 years Arts and Science. Psychology
- 3 years Arts and Science - Microbiology program
- 3 years Anthropology at U of S
- 2 years physical activity classes (pre-nursing classes)
- 2 years of pre-pharmacy
- 2 years of pre-Med at UofR
- 2 years of Kineisiology at UofS
- 2 years of classes for NEPS electives
- 2 years of Arts and Science
- 2 years of an B.Sc. in Anatomy
- 2 years completed of Kineisiology
- 2 years at university in pre-med studies, 1 year in TESL studies
- 2 years Arts and Sciences
- 2 years Arts and Sciences
- 2 years Arts and Science, UofS
- 2 years Arts and Science, UofS
- 2 years Arts and Science, UofS
- 2 years Arts and Science
- 2 years Arts and Science
- 2 years Arts and Science
- 2 years Arts and Science
- 2 years Arts and Science
- 2 years Arts and Science
- 2 years Arts and Science
- 1st years Arts and Science
- 1st year UofR pre-Vet Med
- 1st year University - Arts and Sciences
- 1st year Statistics, English 100, Anatomy,
- 1st Year Pre-Vet Med
- 1st year pre-Vet Med
- 1st year general sciences, University of Alberta
- 1st Year Environmental Studies, York University
- 1st year arts and science at UofS
- 1st year Arts and Science
- 1st year Arts and Science
- 15 credit units short of sociology degree
- 1 year UofS Education
- 1 year of Arts at UofR, Social Sciences for NEPS
- 1 year of Arts at the UofA
- 1 year of Arts and Science at UofS
- 1 year of Arts and Science
- 1 year of Arts and Science
- 1 year of Arts and Science Courses
- 1 year Kineisiology
- 1 year in Sciences
- 1 year Environmental Health and Science - incomplete SIFC

- 1 year business administration
- 1 year basic studies
- 1 year Arts at UofR
- 1 year Arts and Sciences, one year Bible school
- 1 year Arts and Science, 1 year Kinesiology
- 1 year Arts and Science at UofS
- 1 year Arts and Science at UofS
- 1 year Arts and Science at the UofS
- 1 year Arts and Science
- 1 year Arts and Science
- 1 year Arts and Science
- 1 year Arts and Science
- 1 year Arts and Science
- 1 year Arts
- 1 year Agriculture and 2 years Commerce

### Question 1.4d – University Graduate

- UofS, Urban Planning
- UofS in Anthropology and Archeology (honours)
- UofS - Bachelor of Science Kinesiology
- Psychology Honours, 4 yrs at UofS
- College of Kinesiology
- Bachelor of Science Physiology
- Bachelor of Science (Nutrition)
- Bachelors of Human Justice
- Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry
- Bachelor of Physical Activity Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Arts Psychology (1999)
- Bachelor of Science Nutrition
- Bachelor of Science Biology
- Bachelor of Arts Psychology
- Bachelor of Arts Psychology
- Bachelor of Science in Physical Education
- Anthropology/Archaeology
- 3 year Bachelor of Arts major in Sociology

### Question 1.4e - Other

- Some Master's level education (2001)
- Military Medical Training/Experience
- Dental Assistant
- 2 years of Arts & Science

### Question 1.7 Other Type of Employment Experience

- Worked at a doctor's office
- Worked as a Dental Hygienist for 6+ years.
- Was a secretary, typed dictation in a specialist's office (audiologist).
- Ward Aide/assistant
- Unit secretary/nursing attendant
- Unit clerk/pharmacy technician
- Unit Clerk
- Unit clerk
- Unit Assistant at RUH
- Unit Assistant
- Unit aide/clerk
- Therapeutic Recreation
- Summer student
- Service Aide in three different areas in the hospital
- Resident Aide for 3 years
- Research Project Participant
- Research grant
- Recreation person in long term care facility
- Recreation Therapy Aide
- Pool attendant, nursing attendant, service aide
- Physiotherapy Assistant
- Occupational/Physical Therapy Assistant - Nurse's Aide
- Occupational Health and Safety Worker's Compensation Management
- Nursing Assistant
- Nursing Assistant
- Nursing Aide
- Nurses Aide, Personal Care Provider Saskatoon Home Support
- Nurses Aide
- Nurse's Assistant
- NA (Maybe she means Nurses Aide)
- Military - Medical Assistant QL4
- Medical Transcriptionist, Scheduler
- Medical receptionist
- Medical office manager
- Medical Office
- Medical clinics - nursing department
- Lifeguard/Lifesaving Instructor
- Lifeguard
- Lab/X-ray Tech
- In addition to being an EMT, this respondents was also a Home Care/Special Care Aide and a Nurses Aide at St. Paul's Emergency
- Housekeeping RGH, Nursing Attendant WRC
- Housekeeping and Unit Clerk in healthcare system
- Hospital Nurses Aide
- Food and Nutrition
- Exercise Therapist
- EM Dispatcher
- Dietary Aide in Nursing home.

- Dietary Aide
- Dietary Aide
- Dental Assistant
- Dental Assistant
- Dental Assistant
- Community Health (office work)
- Clerk Aide at Hospital
- Childcare provider
- Care Manager
- And home care/special care aide
- And EMT
- Activities Coordinator at care home

### *Section 2*

### NURS 111.6: Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body

#### Question a3vol

- Volunteering at hospital (minimal)
- Special Care Home
- Nursing homes, youth sponsor
- High school
- Biology 30
- Athletic trainer, Youth Education About Health

#### Question a3work

- In house training - nursing attendant - WRC
- Back management, MRSA workshops, palliative gerontology, home care, special care
- Athletic Trainer's Course
- Ambulance workshops – continuous

#### Question a3self

- Summer Employment
- Read other people's textbooks for fun/interest
- Past education/experiences – Life Guarding, CPR/First Aid
- I had read some books and articles related to cancer, lifestyle health, coping, etc.
- First Responder and AED Instructor

#### Question a3other

- WHMIS
- WHMIS
- UofS. Physiology 212 required a grade of 59, so received no transfer of credit. However, combined with my other sciences should had given me that credit
- Through high school in Biology

- Parents(Mom is a RN. Father know a lot about healthy lifestyles and making the changes). other relatives who had breast cancer. leukemia. Lou Garret's Disease. high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, heart problems)
- Military training/courses
- Life guarding, Canadian Ski Patrol, EMT-B
- Life
- In high school
- High school, but was not as in depth as 111.6
- High school courses
- High school biology and chemistry
- High school Biology 30 course
- High school Biology 30 (111 is more in depth though)
- High School Biology (minimal)
- High school biology
- High School
- High school
- High school
- High school
- Health care workers in family
- Grade 12 Biology 30
- Grade 12 Biology
- From my LPN program I need to take an extension 117 from Waskana to get the other 3 credits
- Biology 30
- Biology 30 - high school
- Biology
- Being a human
- A high school teacher who went into great detail for biology

## NURS 112.3: Development of Self

### Question b3vol

- Youth services
- Working with kids/other people
- Working with inner city children
- Working with adolescents, soup kitchen
- Working with adolescents
- Working at summer camps
- Wascana Rehab
- Volunteer work at RUH
- Tutoring adults in English from different countries.
- Special Olympics, Big Brother/Sister Organization
- Scouts Canada
- Peer Support, Kids Help Phone, Student Ambassador
- Peer Support and Wellness in high school
- Pastor's wife

- Outreach program I work with
- Missions trip, soup kitchen
- Missionary Voyage to Haiti
- Member of Peer Support Group in High School
- Junior volunteer, Prince Albert Hospital District
- Instructing sports (figure skating, swimming, soccer)
- Implemented EFAP Northeast Health District
- I've worked in many areas where a high level of caring was required.
- Girl Guides of Canada - over 10 years involvement
- Elmwood Residences, Coaching Soccer
- Church, youth leader, choir member, services
- Church related activities, Leadership role
- Church involvements
- Church involvement
- Care homes, Secret Santa
- Candy striping
- Candy striper, etc.
- Breast-feeding support, group leader
- Being a summer camp staff person, being on various church/school committees

**Question b3work**

- Youth worker workshops
- Workshops for provincial sports teams/classes at church
- Training Retreats for Peer Support Group
- Student/religious retreats
- Spiritual growth conferences/workshops
- Self-exploration, reading, journaling, poetry
- SDH Volunteer Workshop
- SaskTel 13 years – Health field 7 years
- Personal growth workshops
- HOPE Workshop
- Counseling Seminars
- Co-operative Youth/Speaker's Bureau
- Camp counselor training, leadership courses

**Question b3self**

- Self-chosen literature and journal keeping
- Self-awareness
- Reading for personal enjoyment
- Reading and occupational/job skills inventors
- Reading and counseling
- Reading
- Personal Bible study and reflection
- Ongoing personal interest/study
- Meditation, self-exploration
- Lots of reading in self-exploration area

- Life knowledge
- Life experience
- Life experience
- Learned over time - through many experiences
- Learned how to journal/reflect by myself
- Interest (read books about it)
- General life
- Everything I've ever done, everything has helped me acquire that learning
- Day to day life - interacting, learning about yourself
- Daily living, friendships, church involvement, family relationships
- Bible Study, counseling
- Being a human
- Adult, in touch with own feelings

**Question b3other**

- Youth groups, individual spiritual exploration and growth, music
- Youth group & camp experiences yearly; travel experience
- Youth exchange
- Through life experiences
- Self-evaluations for working overseas
- Religion classes in high school
- Personal experience with drug and alcohol addictions, severe depression and recovery
- Parents
- Overseas opportunities
- NLS (life guarding), Biology 30
- Living in dorms in high school
- Life experiences
- Life Experiences
- Life experiences - birth of my child, death of my father
- Life experience
- Life's experiences
- Learned from life experiences, such as church youth group, working with different people, and being involved in peer support
- International study/Work experience
- Interacting with people on a day to day basis.
- I felt it was common sense that I knew just from everyday life experience.
- High school health
- High school
- High school
- General life experience
- General life
- Common sense situations and life in general
- Church related activities
- Catechism, self-analysis, life experience
- Caring for my mom has permanent hip, back, and neck injuries
- Bible College
- 1 year of Bible School

## NURS 113.3: Nursing: An Evolving Profession

### Question c3work

- Health District

### Question c3self

- Independent learning

### Question c3other

- General knowledge
- From taking dental schooling
- Family involvement with nursing issues/SRNA
- Caring for friends and family

## NURS 114.3: Interpersonal Relationships

### Question d3vol

- Youth Services
- Working with homeless children/adults/families
- Working on church/school committees
- Working at summer camp
- Tutoring adults in English from other countries
- Teaching, group leader for youth groups
- Special Olympics, Big Sister Org
- Soccer coach
- Scouts Canada
- SAHO PART
- Resident Assistant in a high school dorm
- Peer support; church volunteering in nursing homes
- Peer Support, Kids Help Phone, Student Ambassador
- Peer education workshops in high school
- Peer counseling/OTA/PTA
- Member of Peer Support Group in high school
- Marriage counseling
- Junior volunteer, PAHD Special Olympics
- Duke of Edinburgh's Young Canadian's Award Challenge, CSPS, guiding, EMT, Co-operative Youth, etc.
- Counselor with children
- Counseling
- Church related activities, including leadership role
- Church
- Breast-feeding support, group leader
- Being a coach, Sunday school teaching
- At the hospital

**Question d3work**

- Youth worker workshops
- Training retreats for Peer Support Group
- Summer camp/life guarding training
- Sports teams workshops/work in-services
- Speech workshop
- Self-help groups
- Peer counseling/OTA/PTA
- Lines of communication
- Crisis counseling
- Ambulance workshops

**Question d3self**

- Trial and error in learning that some people communicate and react differently
- Talking, relationships with others
- Spending time with friends, self exploration
- Self-awareness
- Reading/job skills workshops and workbooks
- Reading communication books
- Read several books on topic
- Once again, some of this stuff seems to be common sense
- Life
- Interacting with other people
- In leadership roles and life situations
- Being a human
- All life experiences
- NURS 112 - Development of Self

**Question d3other**

- Youth exchange
- Through my upbringing, lifetime interaction
- Summer camp counselor, staff training
- Some of it is common sense and I had used it throughout my life, now I had to label it for this class
- Small group studies
- Personal experiences/relationships; psychology
- Member of student rep council - workshops in high school
- Mediation in workplace
- Life Experiences
- Life experiences
- Life experiences
- Life experience
- Life experience - motherhood, friendships, common law relationship
- Learning to communicate with others, like family & friends, throughout my life
- International study/work experience

- In high school health
- High school
- High school
- High school
- High school
- High School - Grade 12 took communications - was the same as N114.3, except it didn't looking at the helping skills as close
- Family
- Everyday life.
- English - communication in high school
- Course is a repeat of 112 and once again I feel I am in touch with my feelings. This could had been a weekend course really.
- Common sense - life experience
- Being a Resident Assistant
- Any activity involvement assists in this : Competitive dance experience, musicals, life guarding competitions

### NURS 115.3: Core Concepts of Care

#### Question e3vol

- Pasqua Hospital Pediatrics
- Candy striper
- Candy striper at hospital
- At long term care facility

#### Question e3work

- WRC Nursing attendant - in-house training
- Workplace
- TLR Course
- In-services for work: TLR, PART, Athletic Training - Rehab, Ambulation, etc.)
- ILR and PART workshops

#### Question e3other

- Working with my mom and her injuries
- Military
- Life experience
- Health care workers in family
- Being a patient and mom was a nurse
- A little from NURS 113.

## NURS 116.3: Introduction to Health Concepts

### Question f3vol

- In a long-term care facility
- Church Involvements
- Church committees

### Question f3work

- Summer School 2002 at the U of S
- RGH
- Church Involvements

### Question f3self

- Read newspapers, journal articles

### Question f3other

- Personal/family experience
- Overseas opportunities
- Life experience
- Life
- General knowledge
- Family, church conferences, church retreats
- Dental schooling

## NURS 211.3: Counseling in Nursing Practice

### Question g3vol

- Working with youth and internationals
- Working at summer camp
- Volunteering at various pharmacies
- Scouts Canada
- Resident Assistant in school dorm
- Peer counseling
- LLL
- Junior volunteer, Special Olympics
- Counseling
- Camp counselor

### Question g3work

- Stages of change training and Integrative Wrap Around Training
- Sexual abuse workshops
- Peer education workshop; conflict management

- Peer counseling
- H.E.R. through LLL
- Crisis counseling
- Conferences, workshops for facilitating counseling
- At hospital and other workplaces
- A class from Northlands College called Developmental Studies Phase I

**Question g3self**

- Was in therapeutic relationship
- Through counseling many friends
- Medical journals
- Life experience
- Being a human

**Question g3other**

- Life's experiences
- Leading Bible studies at camp
- In the work force with public for 22 years
- High school
- Experience with friends always coming to just talk about problems or asking for help
- Counseling at camp over summer & friend/family relationships
- Could had been integrated into NURS 111 & 114
- Being a Resident Assistant/Life
- At home, my dad is a minister

### NURS 212.3: Microbiology for Health Sciences

**Question h3work**

- Safety/HACCP (CFIA)

**Question h3self**

- Reading textbooks of other for fun/interest
- HACCP through Canada Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

**Question h3other**

- High schools
- High school classes
- High School Biology
- High school biology
- High school
- High school
- Different university classes touched various aspects of the class
- Dental assistant training

- Biology in high school
- Biology 30, some information was the same

### NURS 213.6: Therapeutics and Nursing Intervention

#### Question i3vol

- Church (moral, legal, professional, ethical)
- Camp counselor

#### Question i3work

- Sexual abuse workshop
- In hospital workshops

#### Question i3self

- Some is common sense
- Life experience

#### Question i3other

- My own health problems - learned from doctors, nurses, dieticians, etc.
- Dental assistant training

### NURS 215.3: Health Challenges of Adults I

#### Question j3vol

- Special Olympics

#### Question j3work

- Work workshops
- MEHD, RGH
- Hospital services for RNs and LPNs

#### Question j3self

- Internet

#### Question j3other

- Personal experience with four major back surgeries, physiotherapy, acupuncture, chiropractors, (rehab) back braces
- Life learning
- Experience with chronic disease and sudden health changes in family members

## NURS 216.3: Healthy Growth and Development

### Question k3vol

- Youth Services

### Question k3work

- SDH Volunteer Workshop

### Question k3self

- Life experience, childcare, relatives
- Life experience
- General knowledge, babysitting, etc.
- Being a human

### Question k3other

- Psychology 30
- Personal experiences
- Personal experience with infant to old age
- Life's experiences
- High School
- High school
- High school
- Common sense
- Common knowledge

## NURS 217.6: Individual Assessment

### Question l3vol

- Lifeguard club

### Question l3work

- CPR & First Aid
- Assessment RGH

### Question l3other

- In-services from work

## NURS 218.3: Education for Health

### Question m3vol

- Youth Services
- Working with/teaching ESL students
- Working at summer camp
- Tutored adults in English from other countries
- Teaching/leading Bible studies
- Teaching Sunday school and kids clubs
- Taught in-services with SaskTel
- Scouts Canada
- Lifeguard club
- Leading youth and kids clubs
- Girl Guides of Canada teaching
- Girl Guide leader
- First Aid/CPR Instructor
- Co-operative Youth Seminars
- Church involvement

### Question m3work

- Youth workshops
- WSI, swim instructor, work in-services
- WCB Seminars
- Swimming instructor courses
- SDH Volunteer Workshop
- PART Instructor
- Life guarding & lesson courses

### Question m3self

- Very common sense
- Reading, Mohrahinal tapes, etc.
- Overseas/cross-cultural opportunities involving teaching
- Being a human
- A lot was common sense and was learnt in high school

### Question m3other

- School presentations throughout elementary, high school, university, etc. Also from observing teachers, etc.
- Previous teaching opportunities in other courses
- Previous teaching - WHMIS training and other in work place, music, sports - Level 1 Coach
- Microbiology Project
- Life experiences
- Life experience; coaching teams, being a manager to employees, etc.
- Life and work experience

- Leading skill groups at camp
- High school and French immersion trip
- High school
- Dental school
- Counseling instruction
- Counseling at camp, friend/family relationships
- Being a Resident Assistant

### NURS 219.3: Health Challenges of Adults II

#### Question n3vol

- Junior volunteer PAHD, Special Olympics
- Hospital volunteering

#### Question n3work

- Swimming courses
- In-services for work (LTC home)
- Hospital in-services for RNs and LPNs
- Alzheimer "Care at Home" Series

#### Question n3other

- Spending much time in care home with grandmother
- Personal experience, 1st year clinical
- Experience with older family members
- Dental assistant
- Caring for my grandmother dying at home with cancer. My dad is a diabetic.

### NURS 233.6: Practicum I

#### Question o3vol

- EMT, CSPS, NLS, Arthritis Society
- Vounselling
- Camp counselor

#### Question o3work

- WRC nursing attendant - in-house training
- Crisis counseling

#### Question o3other

- Youth retreats
- Other clinical placements

- Other clinical placements

## NURS 300.3: Health Challenges of Adults III: Theory

### Question p3vol

- CSPS, EMT, NLS, Arthritis Society

### Question p3other

- Dental assistant

## NURS 301.3: Health Challenges of Adults III: Clinical

### Question q3vol

- CSPS, EMT, NLS, Arthritis Society

### Question q3self

- In-services from work and co-workers

### Question q3other

- Other clinical placements
- Other clinical placements
- Family experience
- Dental assistant

## NURS 302.3: Health Challenges IV: Theory

### Question r3work

- NEHD
- Community Courses on Child Birth, Caring for infants/toddlers

### Question r3self

- Self Study
- Experience

### Question r3other

- Own children
- Life experience
- Had a child

### NURS 303.3: Health Challenges IV: Clinical

**Question s3self**

- Experience

**Question s3other**

- Own children, adolescent
- My own pregnancy
- Life experience
- Clinical in program other than NEPS.

### NURS 317.3: Family Diversity

**Question t3self**

- Personal family diversity
- Life experience
- Life experience

**Question t3other**

- Self help groups and family experiences
- Life experience/Common sense
- Extensive experience with my own family in relation to ourselves, the different communities we've been a part of, and analyzing my own extended family
- A lot of course material was touched throughout the other NEPS classes in 1st and 2nd year

### NURS 319.3: Issues in Nursing

**Question u3work**

- At work

**Question u3other**

- It doesn't seem (so far) to be teaching that much brand new material. It seams repetitive from other subjects touched at various times in the NEPS program
- I think our courses overlap a little too much at times, because this material has been covered in several other classes.
- Family (is very up to date and interested in what's going on politically and mother is a RN)

### NURS 325.3: Practice in Communities

**Question v3vol**

- Coaching

**Question v3work**

- Corrections conferences

**Question v3other**

- Years of life experience within employment. Healthcare in small and large communities
- Overseas internships, one specifically addressing issue of health and access to safe water in communities throughout the country
- Nursing 113 and 116
- Living in the north and sitting on environmental groups and health boards
- Job
- HIV/AIDS International Internship
- High school
- Nursing 113.3 and 116.3

### NURS 327.3: Participating with Groups

**Question w3vol**

- Working at summer camp
- Small group Bible Studies
- Self-help groups
- Peer support, working together in groups in everyday life
- Group leader for various organizations
- ESL language department, teaching overseas, bible college courses
- Co-operative Youth Seminars
- Camp counselor

**Question w3work**

- These are always multi-sectoral
- Self-help groups
- Co-operative youth program/Speaker's Bureau

**Question w3other**

- Very repetitive from other NEPS Classes
- Sitting on health boards and environmental groups
- Personal experience
- N113, N211, N317
- Mediation training for work
- Life experiences

- Learned the majority of this course work in other NEPS classes
- Clubs, sports teams, student representation council
- Camp, leading groups at camp and Bible school
- NURS 233 clinical in community mental health

### NURS 418.3: Management in Health Systems

**Question x3self**

- Reading on subjects

**Question x3other**

- Co-workers and nurse manager working together

### NURS 419.3: Research for Professional Practice

- No prior learning comments

### NURS 420.3: Partnerships With Community

**Question z3vol**

- Youth Services/SDH

**Question z3work**

- SDH Workshops
- Probation conferences

**Question z3other**

- Parent's work experiences
- Overseas internship
- N113, N325
- Life experience with communities and groups
- High school

## *Section 3*

### Final Comments

- Working at WRC and General Hospital has given me the opportunity to consider some nursing issues that are moral, legal, and ethical in nature. It is great to had that background within the hospital setting to had the opportunity to critically think and formulate a personal standpoint about what issues are important.

- Only for courses dating back 1-2 years - 5 years is too much.

- My issues with the program lie beyond this survey such as excessive repetition in courses. I guess this is a good idea as I know people with other degrees are having problems getting their knowledge recognized. In particular, one student started out with us & was to had to take all 4 years of Nursing despite the fact she had a degree in Health & one other degree. She transferred to the U of A 1st term of the 1st year because it was only going to take her 2 yrs. It is to bad we had to loose people like that to another program.

- My issue is not receiving credit for this class e.g. N216 and Psych 210; credit for N216 can't be used at U of R for Pysch. 210.

- May depend on how expensive it would be.

- I would also be interested if it was offered for other programs (I hope to enter medicine after I finish nursing so I feel it will be useful in that program as well.)
-
- I think this would be a valuable program is used in conjunction with other tools and changes to the program. I believe nursing should not be direct entry. A lot of people choose nursing simply because it's easier to get into than any other specialized colleges. By having 1-2 years pre-nursing classes in Arts and Sciences, people that wanted to be more committed to the nursing profession as a career would be more likely to make that commitment if they knew that they couldn't be up against people who had good marks, etc. but don't actually plan on staying in the program. The 1-2 years pre-nursing could include classes that are already in the nursing program, but are offered by other colleges thus being able to shorten the nursing program as well as had students somewhat prepared when they enter the program.

- I had nothing to qualify at this point, otherwise I would.

- I feel that having PLAR would be more inclusive in determining which students should be accepted into the program. Right now, the only way students are accepted, is through their academic marks (which is entirely unfair, some students excel academically more than others, yet others may excel in clinical skills). It should be distributed on other methods, other than just through their marks.

- Even if I would not receive credit I know there are many others who may benefit.
- But if I felt that I had already learned some of the courses already, I would be interested in utilizing PLAR.

- Because I came right from high school with no prior learning or experience. But I can see how this could be very helpful to others who do had prior learning or experience.

- 419.3 - There was a statistics class that helped understand some terms at the UofR

- 213.6 - Should be a challenge exam or credit, 301.3 - Important clinical rotation - I would not challenge, 302.3 - Too much new info.

- NURS 112.3 - Challenge exam would be most appropriate as all psych classes touch on this material not just one. NURS 114.3 - Overseas work experience and numerous psych classes had covered the content of this class. A challenge exam or skills demo would work. NURS 211.3 - Humanistic psychology deals with this for class content.

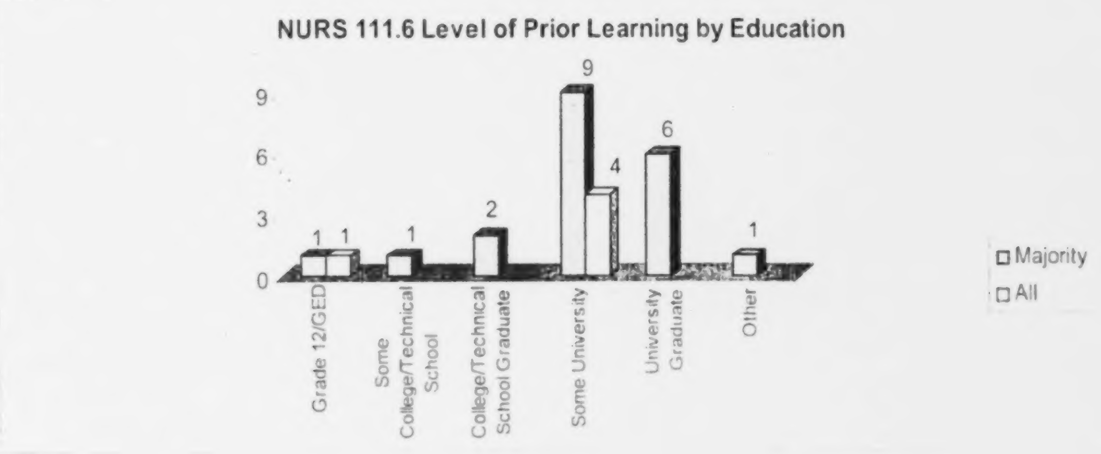
## APPENDIX B

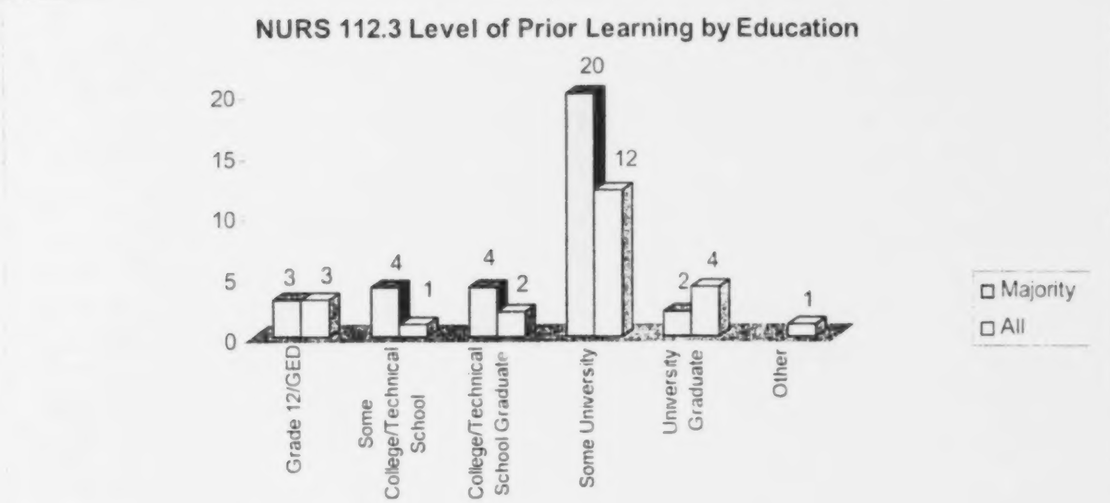
### Highest Level of Education Compared With Level of Prior Learning

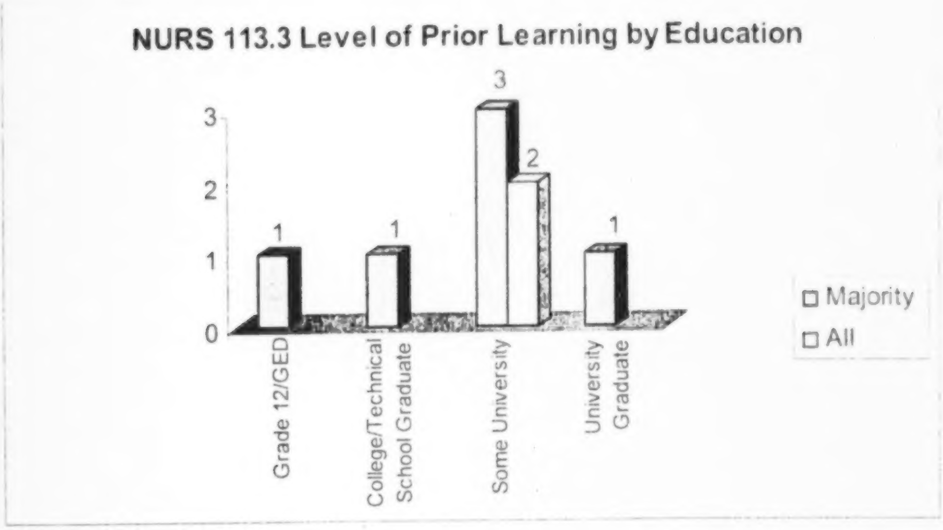
The main cohort of students by highest level of education, who felt they had prior learning that meets the majority or all of the NEPS course intents, were those with 'some university education'.

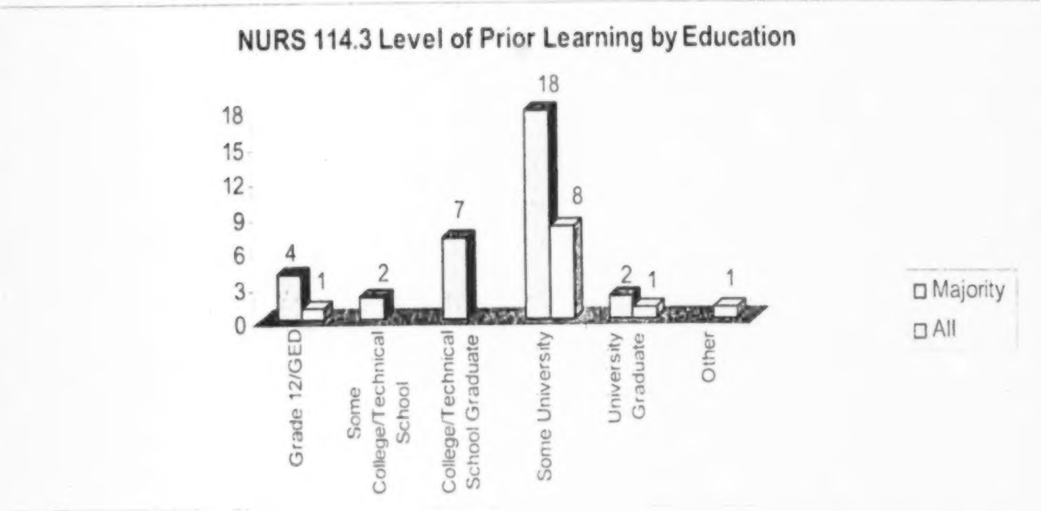
Note: The following results are reported by actual student count (i.e. 9 students with some university education feel they meet the majority of the course intents for Nursing 111.6)

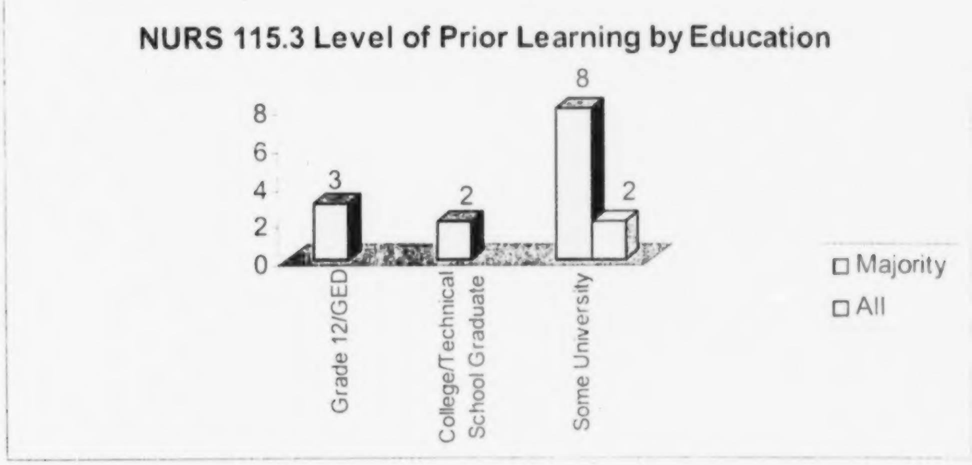
***Nursing 100 Level Courses***

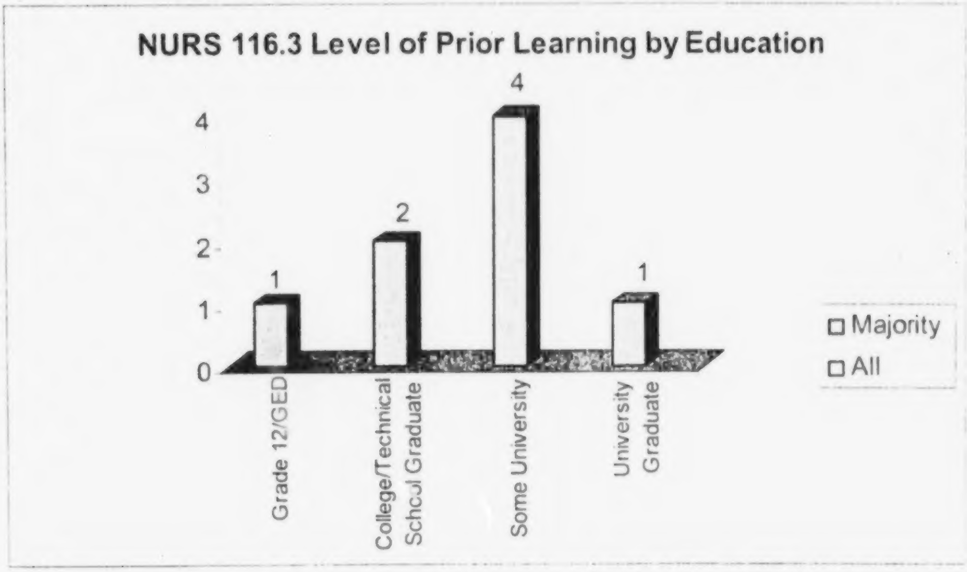




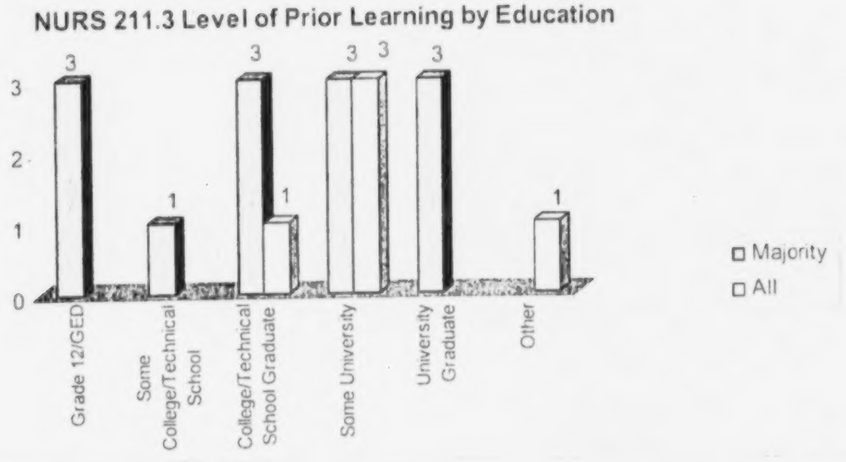

NURS 113.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education
3
2
1
0
1
1
3
2
1
Grade 12/GED
College/Technical School Graduate
Some University
University Graduate
☐ Majority
☐ All

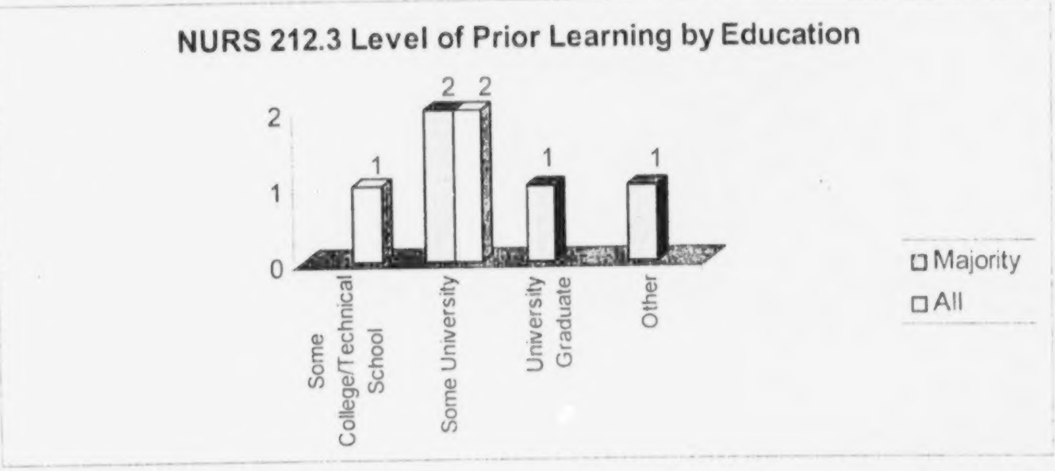

NURS 114.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education
18
15
12
9
6
3
0
4
1
2
7
18
8
2
1
1
Grade 12/GED
Some College/Technical School
College/Technical School Graduate
Some University
University Graduate
Other
☐ Majority
☐ All

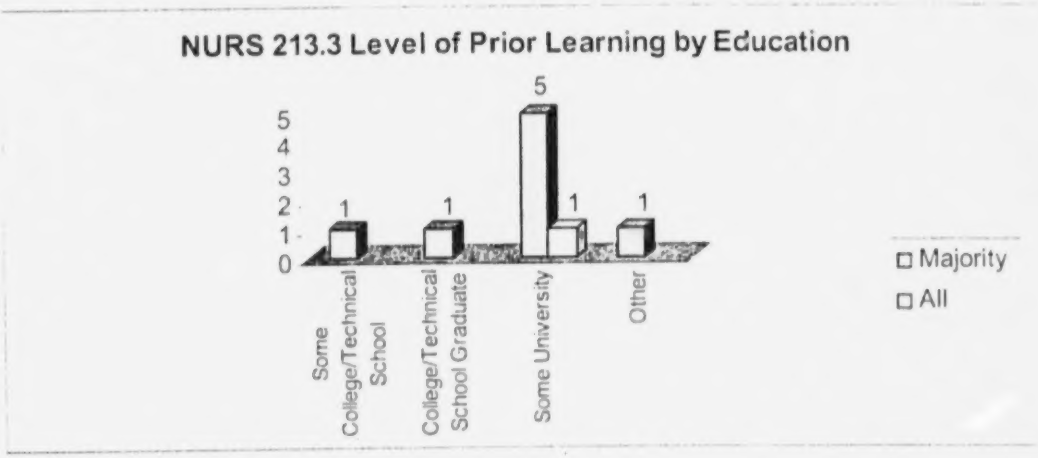

NURS 115.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education
8
6
4
2
0
3
2
8
2
Grade 12/GED
College/Technical School Graduate
Some University
□ Majority
□ All

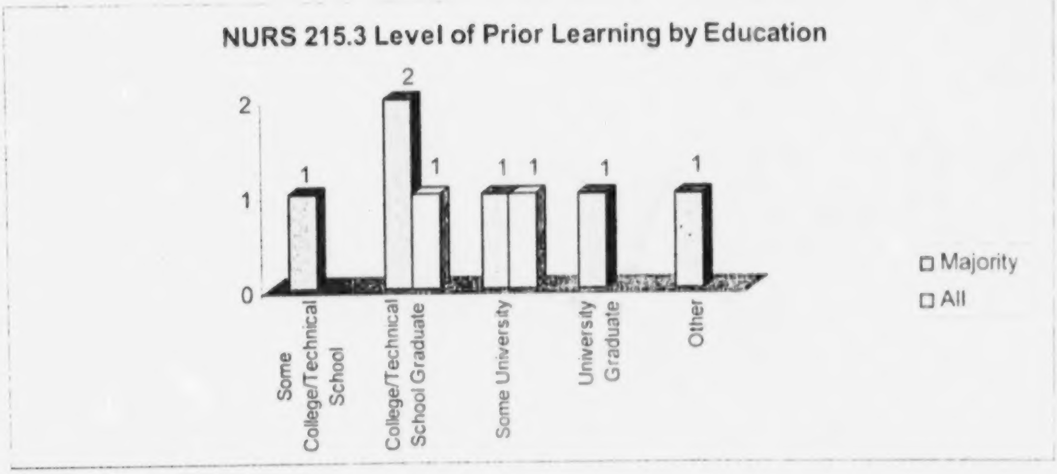

NURS 116.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education
4
3
2
1
0
1
2
4
1
Grade 12/GED
College/Technical School Graduate
Some University
University Graduate
□ Majority
□ All

***Nursing 200 Level Courses***

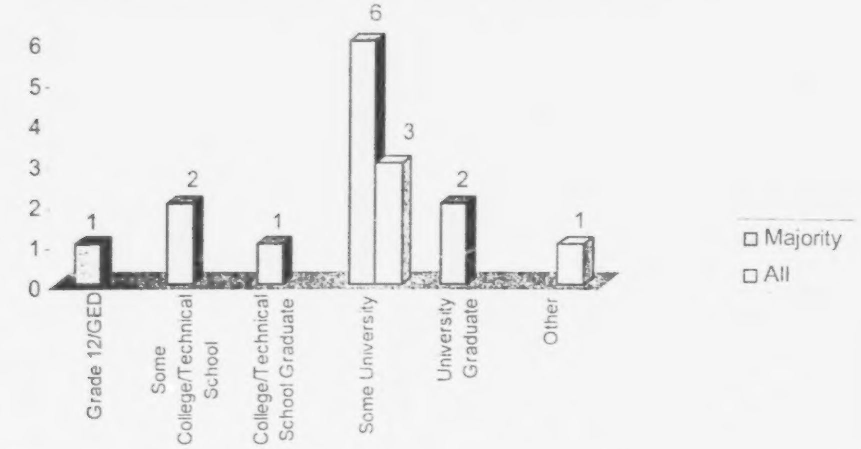




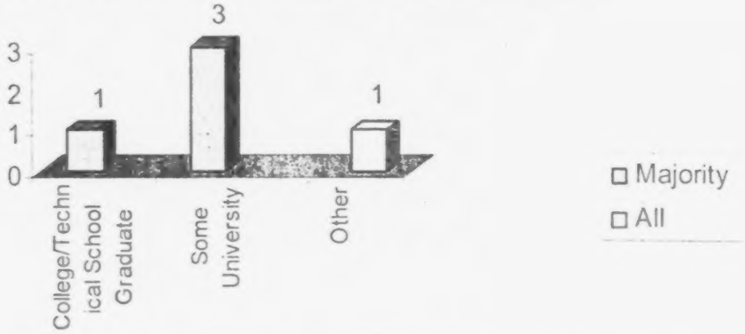

NURS 213.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education
5
4
3
2
1
0
1
1
5
1
1
Some College/Technical School
College/Technical School Graduate
Some University
Other
☐ Majority
☐ All

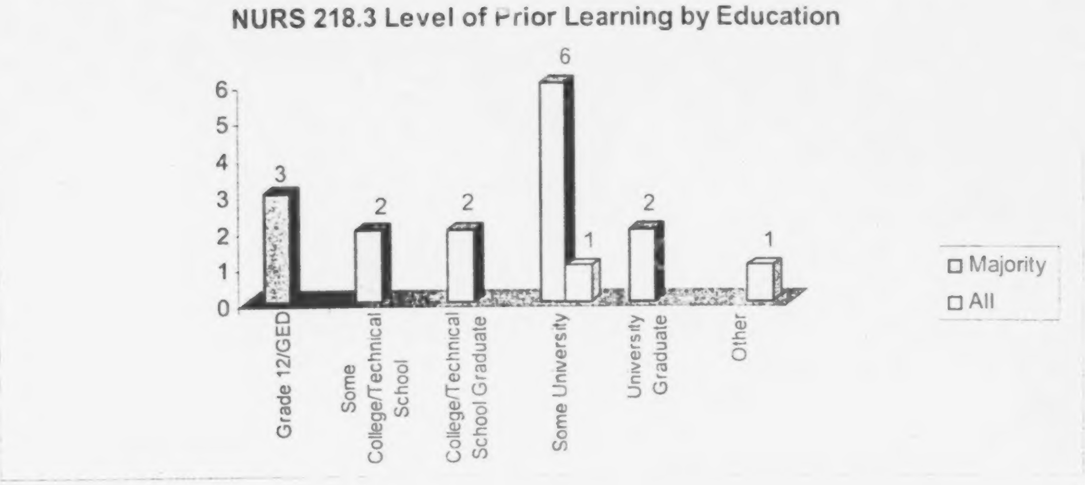

NURS 215.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education
2
1
0
1
2
1
1
1
1
1
Some College/Technical School
College/Technical School Graduate
Some University
University Graduate
Other
☐ Majority
☐ All

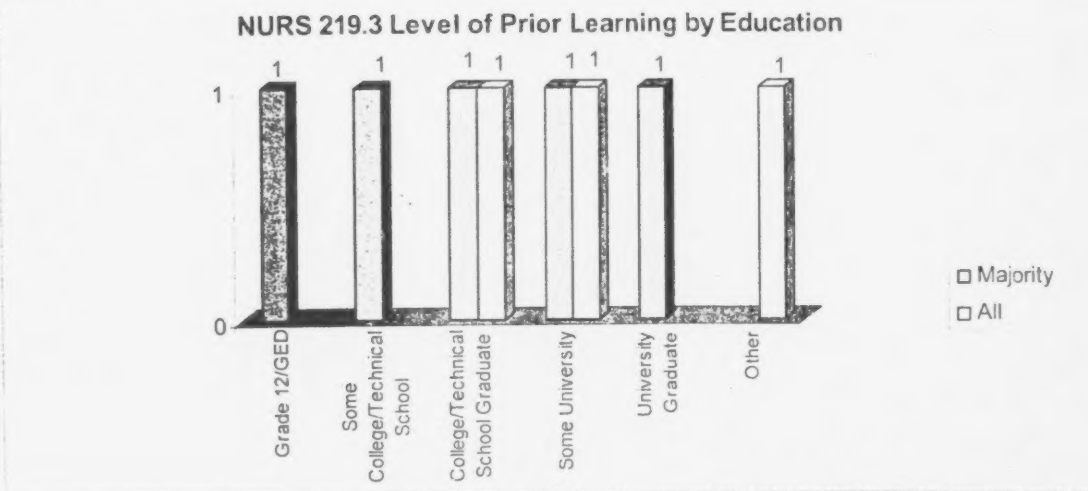
NURS 216.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education



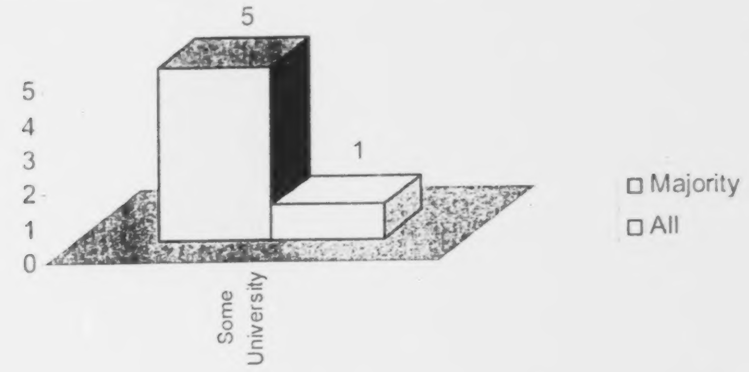
NURS 217.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education




NURS 218.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
3
2
2
6
1
2
1
Grade 12/GED
Some College/Technical School
College/Technical School Graduate
Some University
University Graduate
Other
☐ Majority
☐ All

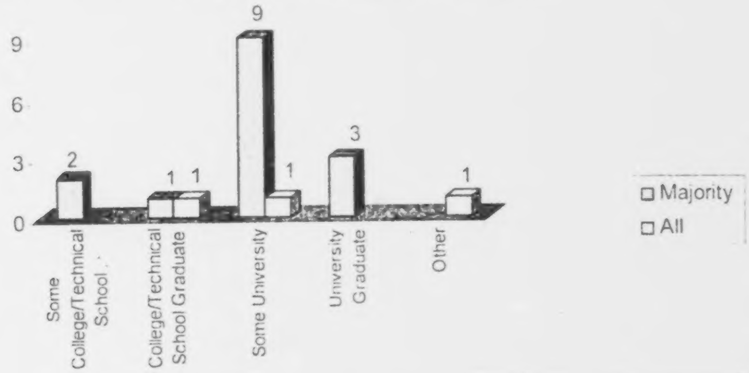

NURS 219.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education
0
1
1
1
1 1
1 1
1
1
Grade 12/GED
Some College/Technical School
College/Technical School Graduate
Some University
University Graduate
Other
☐ Majority
☐ All

NURS 233.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education

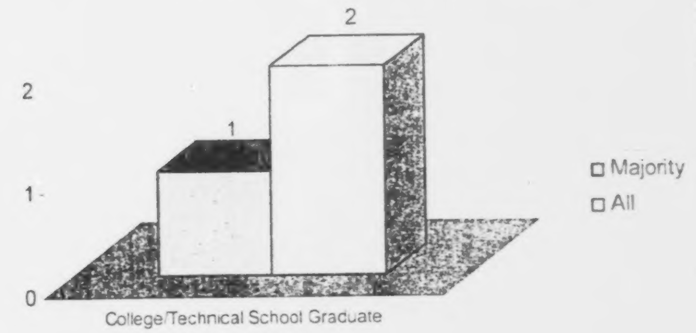


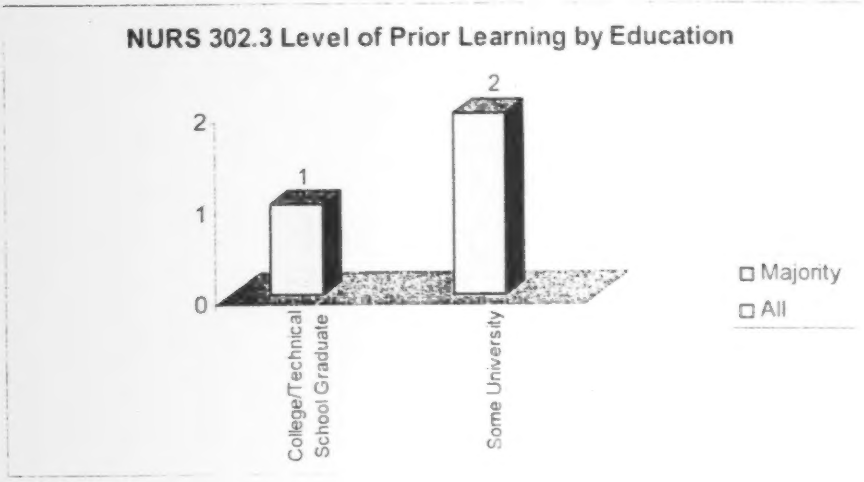
### *Nursing 300 Level Courses*

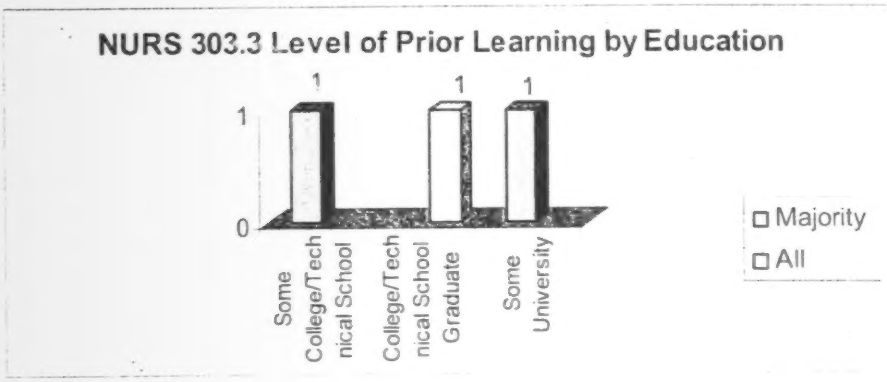
NURS 300.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education

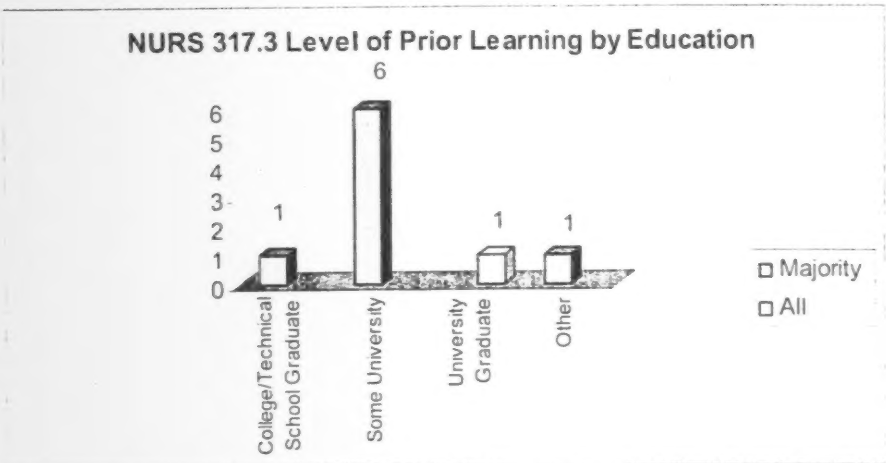


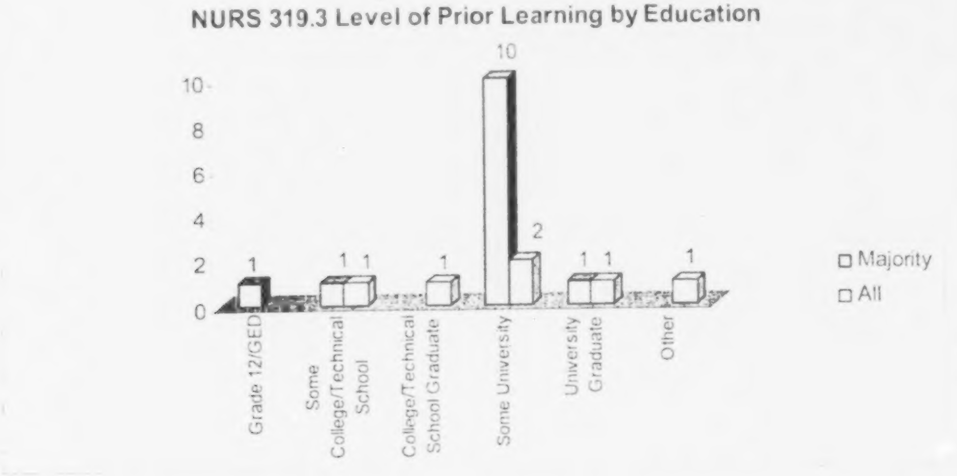
NURS 301.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education

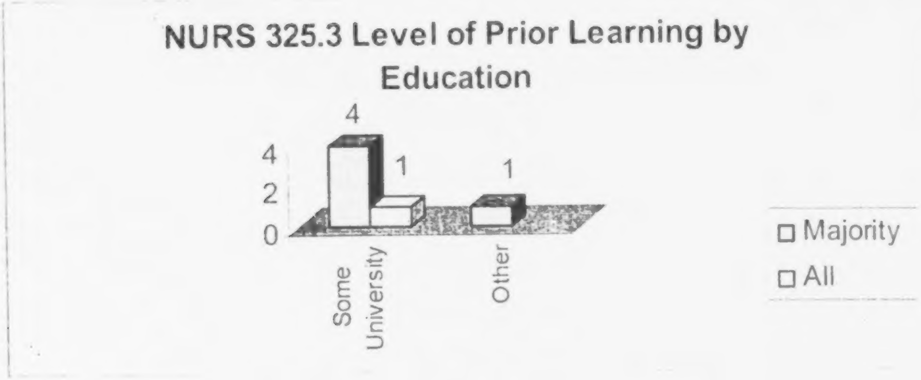


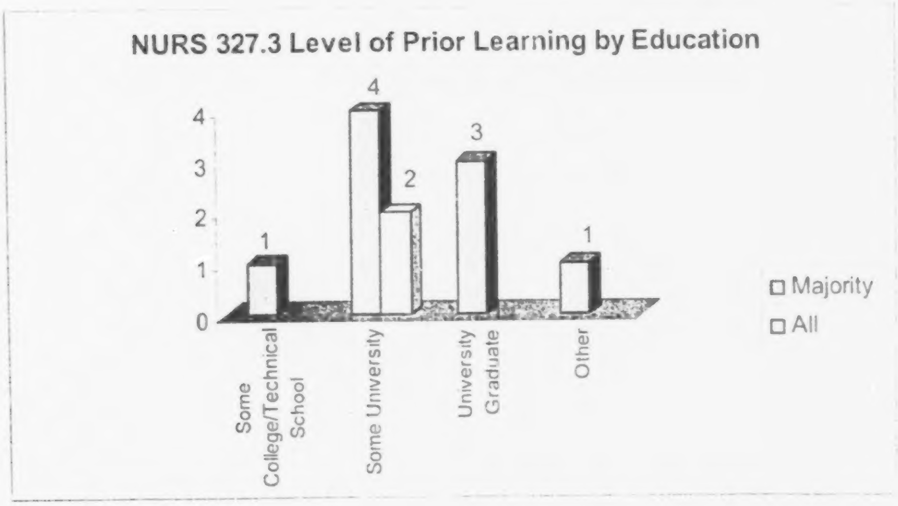

NURS 302.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education


NURS 303.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education


NURS 317.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education


NURS 319.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education

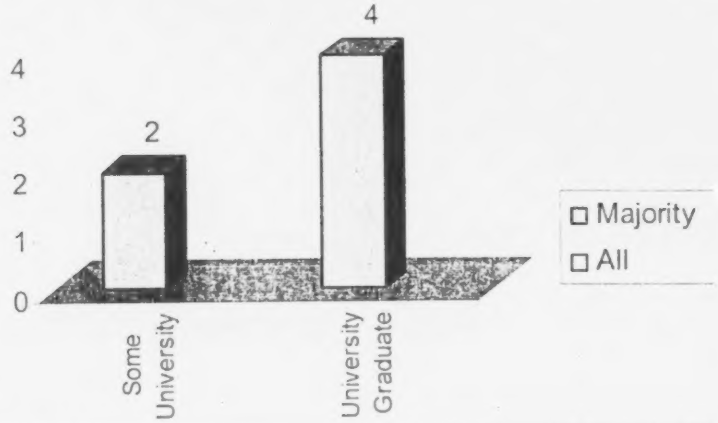

NURS 325.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education


NURS 327.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education

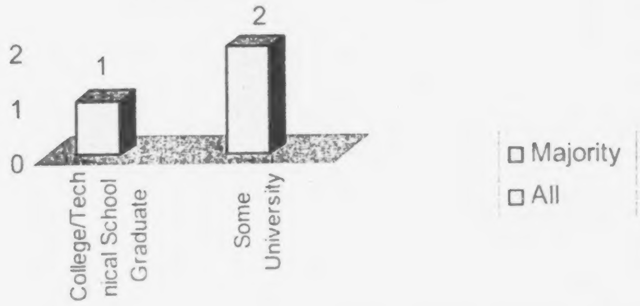
***Nursing 400 Level Courses***

**NURS 418**

None of the respondents felt they had prior learning that meets the majority or all of the course intents for NURS 418.



NURS 419.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education



NURS 420.3 Level of Prior Learning by Education

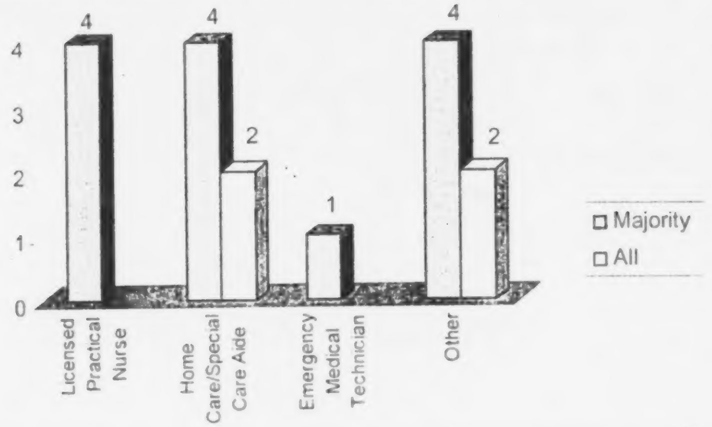
## Occupation Compared with Level of Prior Learning

The majority of students with previous health care experience, who felt they had significant prior learning for NEPS courses, are Home Care/Special Care Aides and Licensed Practical Nurses.

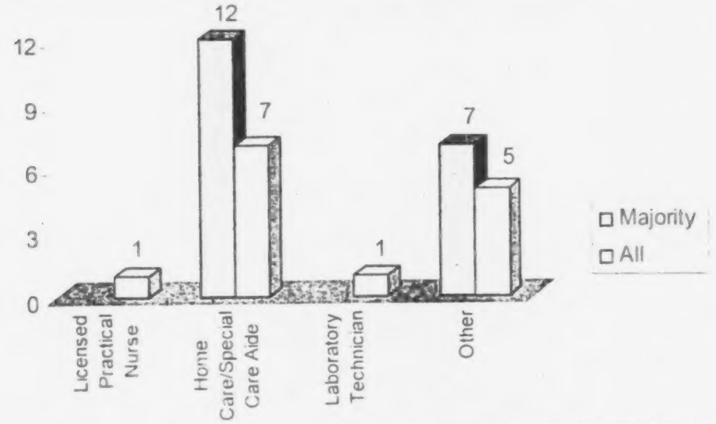
Note: The following results are reported by actual student count (i.e., four students with a licensed practical nurse background felt they met the majority or all of the course intents for Nursing 111.6)

### *Nursing 100 Level Courses*

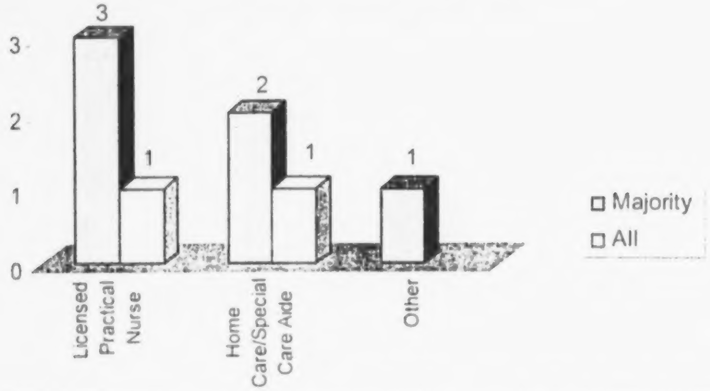
**NURS 111.6 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation**



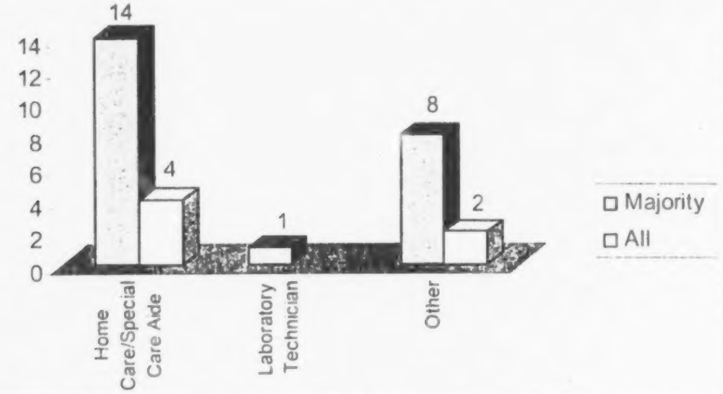
**NURS 112.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation**

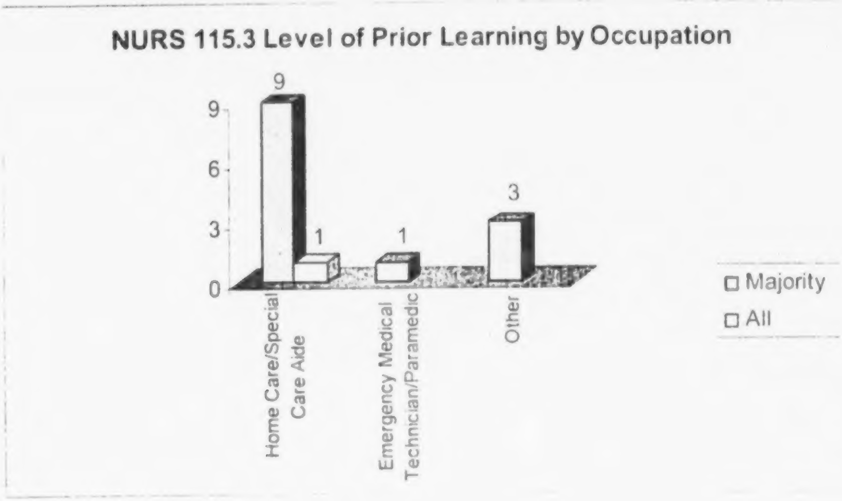


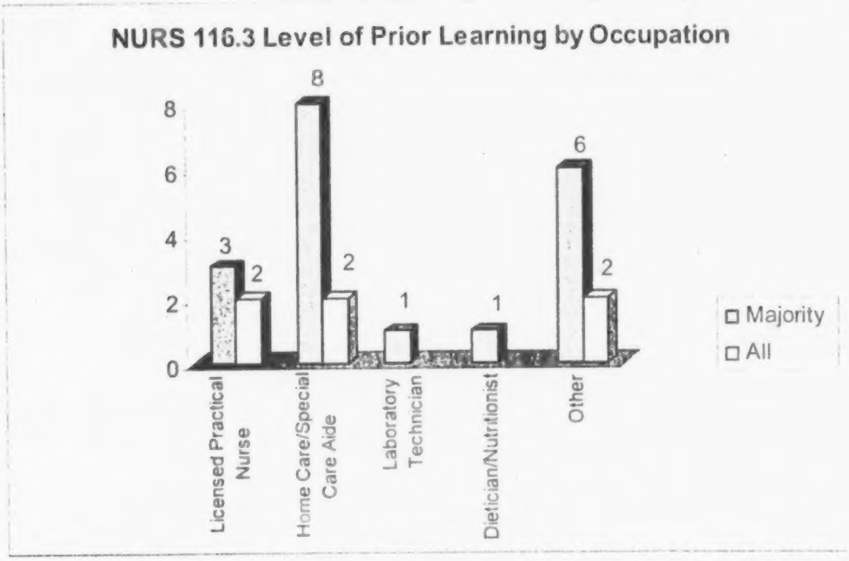
**NURS 113.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation**



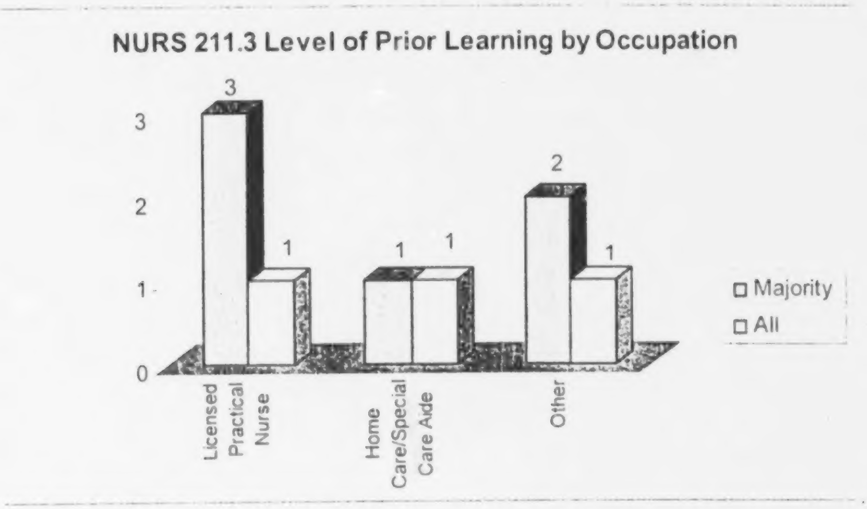
**NURS 114.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation**

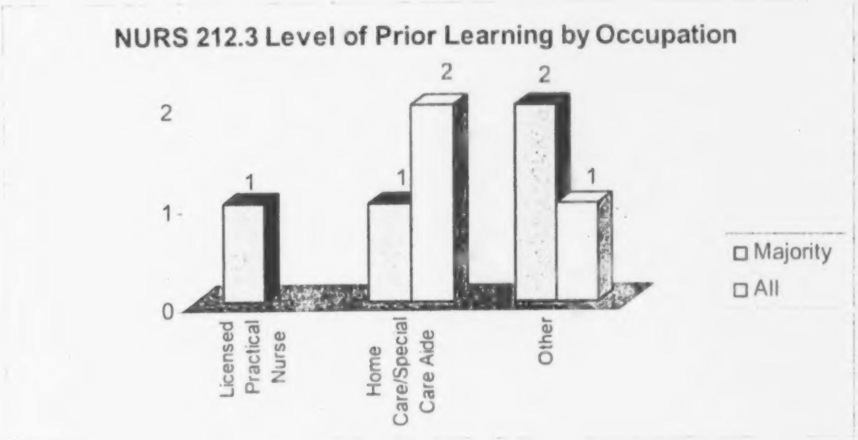



NURS 115.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation
9
6
3
0
9
1
1
3
Home Care/Special Care Aide
Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
Other
Majority
All

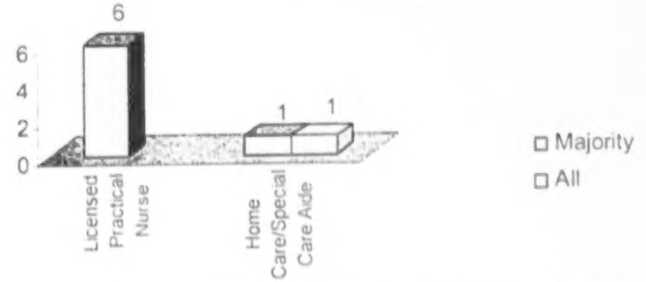

NURS 116.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation
8
6
4
2
0
3
2
8
2
1
1
6
2
Licensed Practical Nurse
Home Care/Special Care Aide
Laboratory Technician
Dietician/Nutritionist
Other
Majority
All

***Nursing 200 Level Courses***

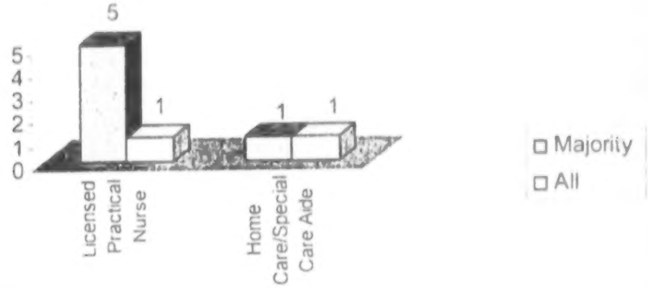




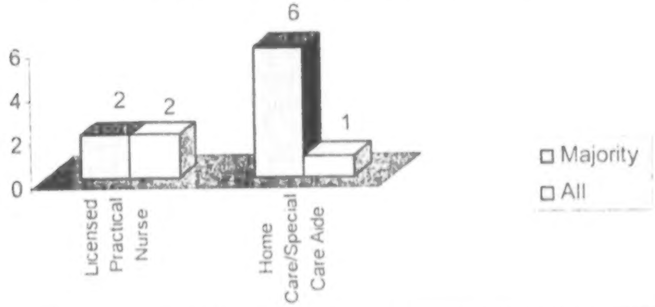
**NURS 213.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation**

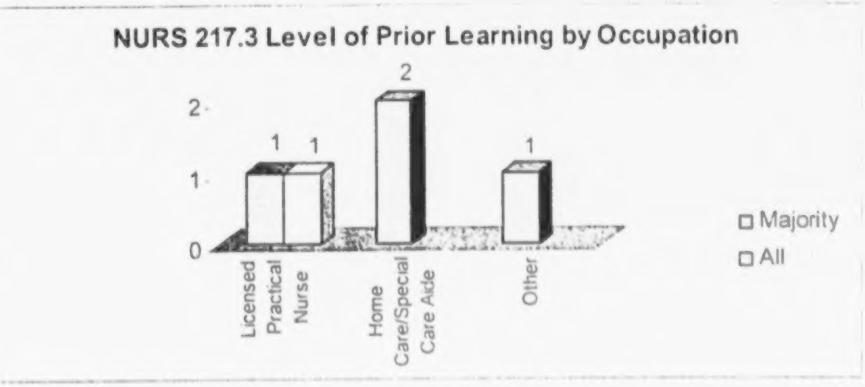


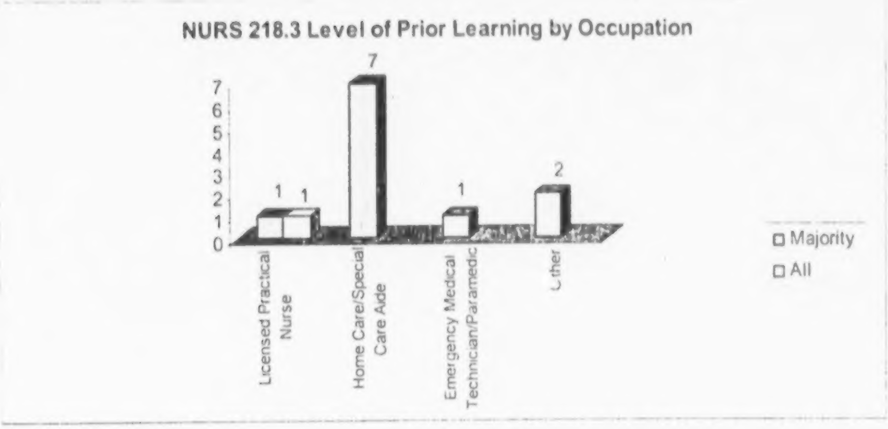
**NURS 215.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation**

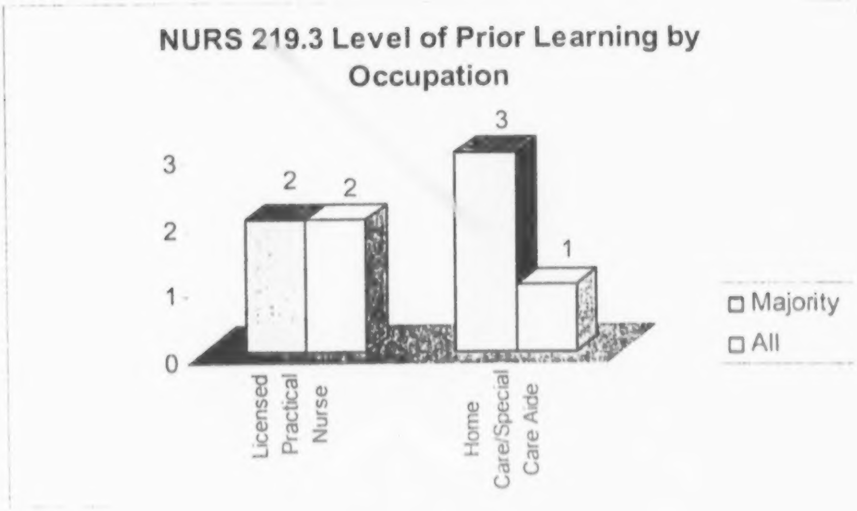


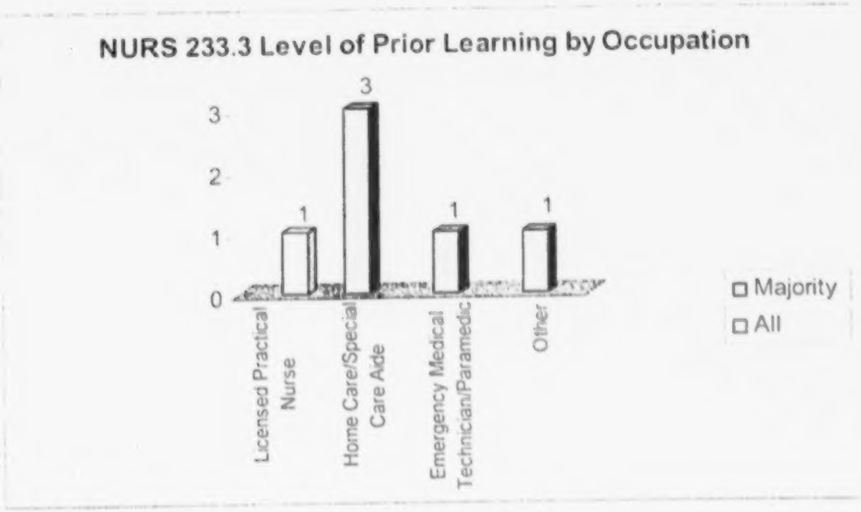
**NURS 216.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation**



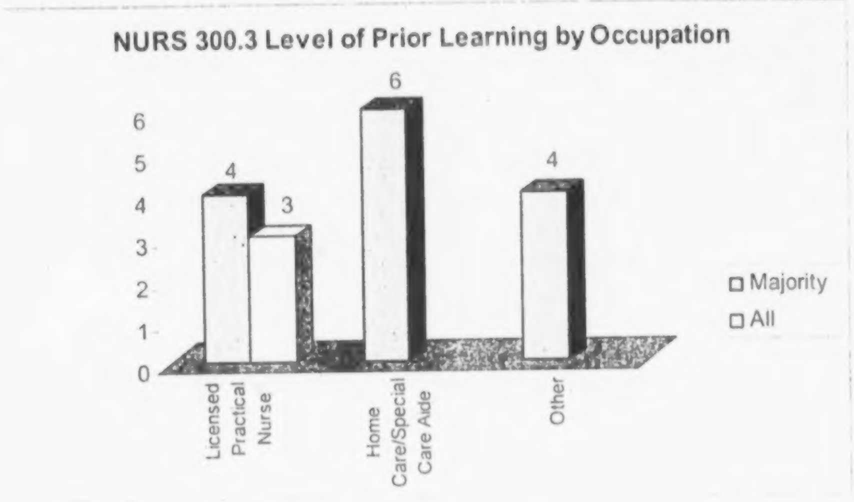

NURS 217.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation


NURS 218.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation

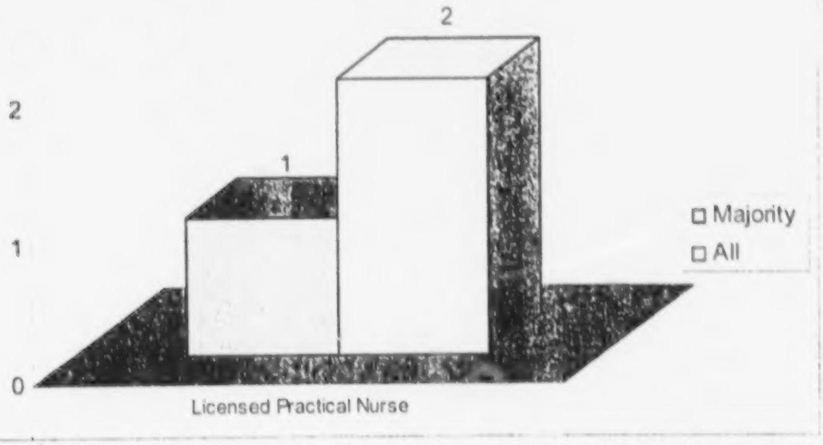

NURS 219.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation



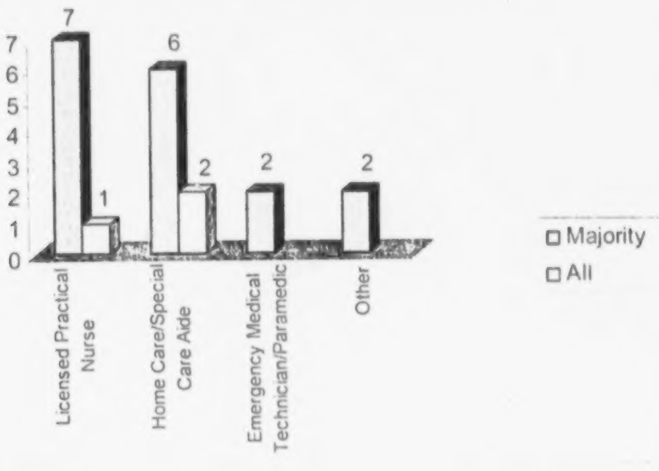
## Nursing 300 Level Courses

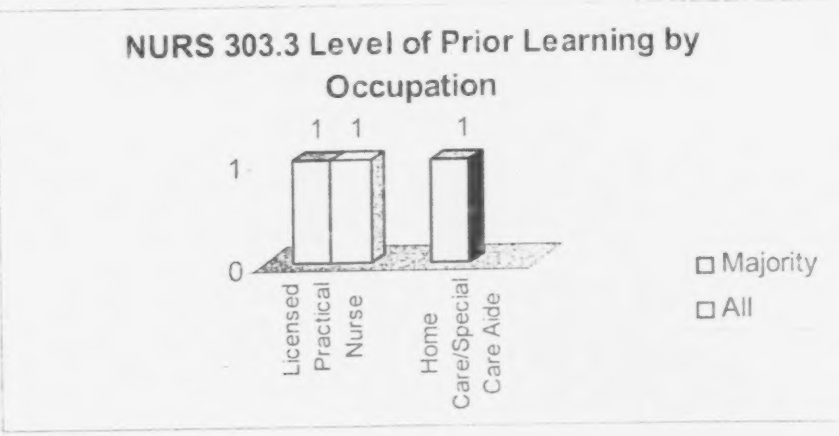


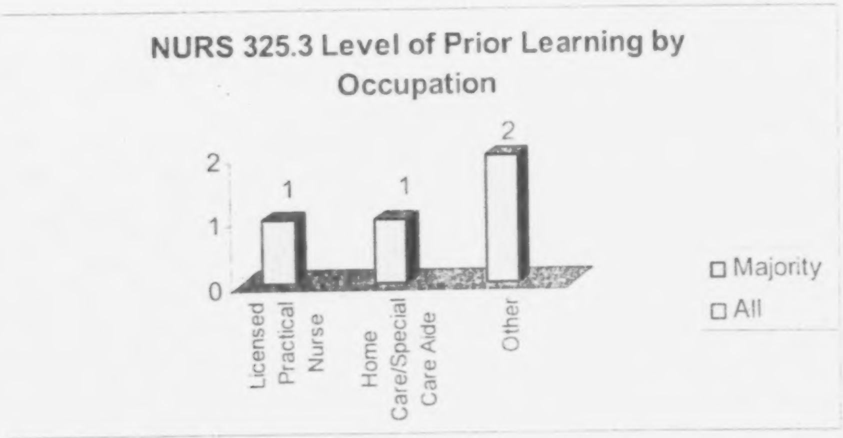
**NURS 301.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation**

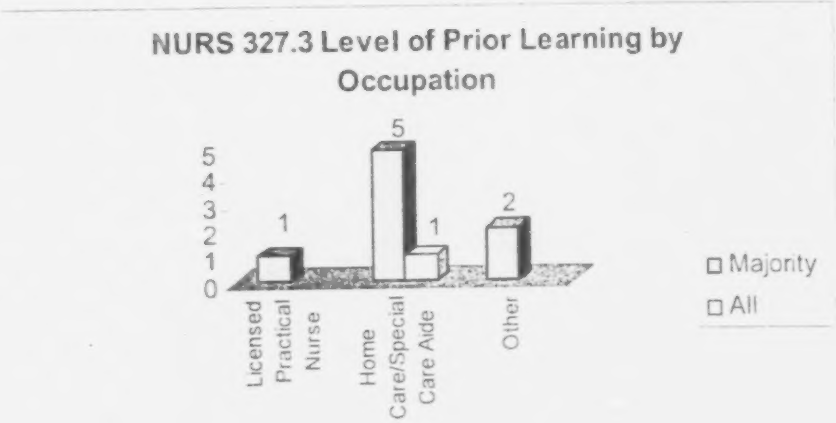


**NURS 302.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation**




NURS 303.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation
1
0
1
1
1
Licensed Practical Nurse
Home Care/Special Care Aide
☐ Majority
☐ All

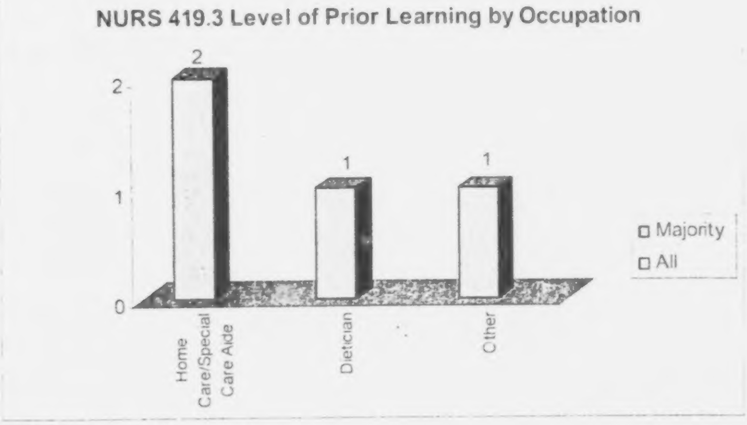

NURS 325.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation
2
1
0
1
1
2
Licensed Practical Nurse
Home Care/Special Care Aide
Other
☐ Majority
☐ All

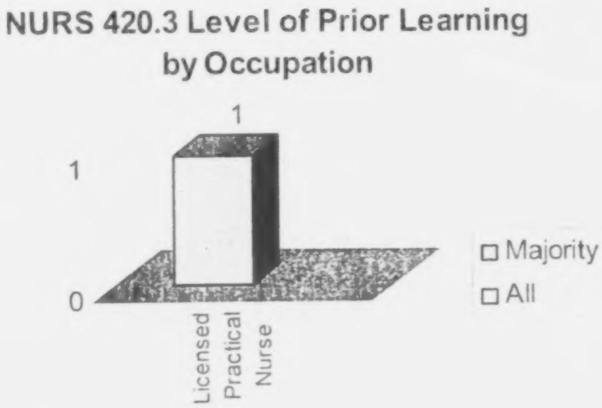

NURS 327.3 Level of Prior Learning by Occupation
5
4
3
2
1
0
1
5
1
2
Licensed Practical Nurse
Home Care/Special Care Aide
Other
☐ Majority
☐ All

## Nursing 400 Level Courses

### NURS 418

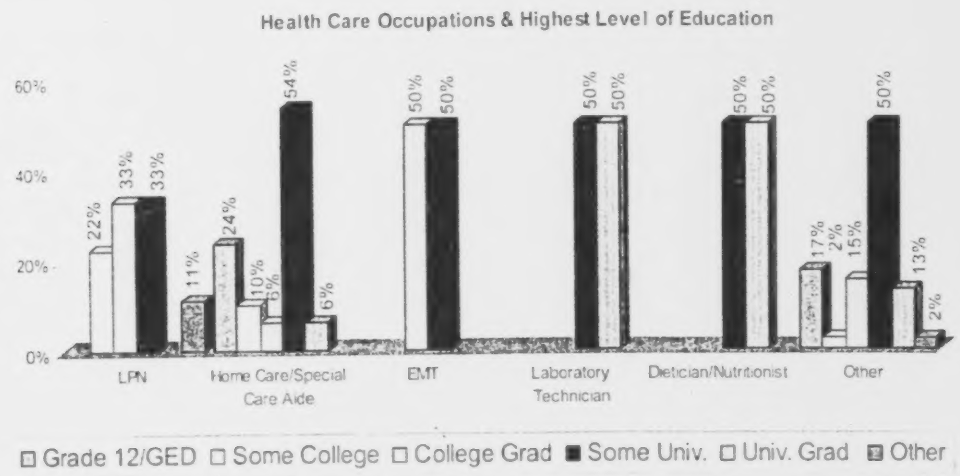
None of the respondents felt they had prior learning that meets the majority or all of the course intents for NURS 418.





## APPENDIX C

### Health Care Occupations Compared with Highest Level of Education



### Home Care Special Care Aides

There were only three students, with work experience as a Home Care/Special Care Aide, who reported that they graduated from a Home Care/Special Care Aide Program at an accredited post-secondary institution.

Over half of the students (52% or 43 of 83) with experience as Home Care/Special Care Aides indicated their highest level of education attained prior to entering the NEPS program was "some university". The following is a list of the partial university training taken by these students. None of these students had reported graduating from a Home Care/Special Care Aide Program. However, it is likely that many have received significant on the job training.

1. 2 years of Pre-pharmacy
2. 2 years Arts and Science
3. 1st Year Pre-Vet Med
4. 1 year of Arts and Sciences Courses
5. 1 year Arts and Science
6. Attended Minot State University (Physical Education), U of S Arts and Science
7. Currently working on degree on Anthropology Applied
8. 3 years Psychology
9. 3 years Arts and Science - Microbiology program
10. 3 years of U of S - major in Physiology
11. 1 year of Arts and Science at U of S
12. 2 years Arts and Science
13. 1 year Arts and Science
14. 1 year Arts and Sciences. one year Bible school
15. 1st year University - Arts and Sciences

16. Year 1 of Arts and Science at U of S
17. 2 years Arts and Sciences
18. Psychology
19. Arts and Science courses for 2.5 years
20. 1 year Arts and Science
21. 15 credit units short of Sociology degree
22. U of S (1.5 years of classes)
23. All electives for Nursing
24. Undergraduate studies in Arts & Science
25. 2 years of a B.Sc. in Anatomy
26. Arts and Science at Red Deere College
27. 1 year of Arts at the U of A
28. Classes for Nursing
29. 2 years of Kinesiology at U of S
30. Psychology 110, Sociology 110, English 110, Native Studies 110
31. 2 years Arts and Science, U of S
32. 1 year Environmental Health and Science - incomplete SIFC
33. Classes needed for Nursing degree
34. 2 years Arts and Science
35. Year 1 Arts and Science
36. Psych class and computer
37. Non-Nursing credited classes
38. 1 year basic studies
39. Human Justice
40. Was in faculty of science for 2 years
41. 1 year Kinesiology
42. 1 year of pre-med at U of R

**Licensed Practical Nurses**

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) make up a smaller proportion of the NEPS student population who participated in the program (6% of students with work experience). Due to the wording of the survey question asking student's to indicate their highest level of education, a few of the LPN-NEPS students indicated their highest level of education was 'some university' (33% or 3 of 9). In addition, two of the LPN-NEPS students selected the "some college/technical school" category and then indicated in brackets they had received their LPN diploma. It is assumed these individuals simply selected the wrong category, and should have selected "college/technical school graduate". Note: all of the LPNs who participated in the survey have graduated from a college/technical institution. The majority of the LPNs indicated they had taken their practical nursing program through SIAST. The following is a list of open-ended responses provided by the students regarding their college/technical LPN training.

1. SIAST Licensed Practical Nurse Program and 1 year Arts and Science for University Level classes needed for Nursing
2. LPN Program at SIAST
3. Northlands College/SIAST Woodlands - LPN certificate
4. Licensed Practical Nurse
5. LPN
6. SIAST LPN
7. LPN - SIAST Wascana

8. LPN - SIAST
9. Practical Nursing

### Emergency Medical Technicians

Students who had worked as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) indicated they are either college school graduates or had some university experience. Due to the wording of the survey question asking student's to indicate their highest level of education, it is very likely that all six of the EMTs had graduated from an accredited program, but some EMT's may had perceived their university experience as being at a 'higher level'.

### Laboratory Technicians, & Dieticians/Nutritionists

The respondents with occupational backgrounds as Laboratory Technicians or Dieticians/Nutritionists indicated they had either some university educations or are university graduates. As with the LPNs and EMTs, the laboratory technician that indicated they had 'some university' most likely had a college diploma/certificate, but feel that a university level education is perceived as a higher level of education.

### Other Occupations

The majority (50%) of those students with other types of health-care work experience indicated they had some university education.

A closer look at the 'other aide' positions revealed these respondents had not graduated from a formal program related to their occupations.

- The Resident Aide reported that Grade 12 was the highest level of education attained.
- Two of the Nursing Assistants reported they had Grade 12 education, and one had taken 1 year of Arts and Science.
- The "NA" reported a Grade 12 education.
- The Nurse's Aides all reported some college/university: 15 credits short of a Sociology degree, 1 year of Bible School, 1 year of U of S Education, and 4 years of Biology (2 years at U of S & 2 years at another University).

## APPENDIX D

### Current Course Offerings in the NEPS

- NURS 111.6 – Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body
- NURS 112.3 – Development of Self
- NURS 113.3 – Nursing: An Evolving Profession
- NURS 114.3 – Interpersonal Relationships
- NURS 115.3 – Core Concepts of Care
- NURS 116.3 – Introduction to Health Concepts
- NURS 211.3 – Counseling in Nursing Practice
- NURS 212.3 – Microbiology for Health Sciences
- NURS 213.6 – Therapeutics and Nursing Intervention
- NURS 215.3 – Health Challenges of Adults I
- NURS 216.3 – Healthy Growth and Development
- NURS 217.6 – Individual Assessment
- NURS 218.3 – Education for Health
- NURS 219.3 – Health Challenges of Adults II
- NURS 233.6 – Practicum I
- NURS 300.3 – Health Challenges of Adults III: Theory
- NURS 301.3 – Health Challenges of Adults III: Clinical
- NURS 302.3 – Health Challenges IV: Theory
- NURS 303.3 – Health Challenges IV: Clinical
- NURS 317.3 – Family Diversity
- NURS 319.3 – Issues in Nursing
- NURS 325.3 – Practice in Communities
- NURS 327.3 – Participating With Groups
- NURS 418.3 – Management in Health Systems
- NURS 419.3 – Research for Professional Practice
- NURS 420.3 – Partnerships With Community

# APPENDIX TWO:

## STUDENT SURVEY COVER LETTER

## STUDENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

January 20, 2003

Dear NEPS Student:

**Re: Student Survey to Support the NEPS-Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Study**

---

Saskatchewan Learning approached the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan to consider undertaking a needs assessment for **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)** in the NEPS. In response, the College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan and the Nursing Division, SIAST put forth a joint research proposal, which has been funded by the Department of Learning, to investigate the potential use of PLAR as one possible strategy that may facilitate the progression of students through the NEPS.

In post-secondary education, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a systematic process of assessing, recognizing and awarding credit for learning (knowledge, skills, values, etc.) that meets the learning intents of an accredited course or program, but which has been gained outside of formal education through a variety of means, such as work, non-credit courses, industry training, volunteer activities, life experiences, and so on. It is important to understand that PLAR credit is awarded for the demonstrated learning acquired through these experiences, not for the experience itself.

In order to assess if there is a need to develop and implement a PLAR process in the NEPS, it is necessary to discover whether or not the current student body perceives that they have a significant level of relevant prior learning; and, to determine whether or not there would be a demand for a PLAR process by NEPS students, if such a process was offered.

To this end, NEPS has engaged the services of Calibre Strategic Services (SK) Inc. and Pulse Research Limited to conduct a student survey. Calibre Strategic Services and Pulse Research Limited are the Saskatchewan members of The Calibre Group of Companies. Based in Saskatoon, they provide business consulting and market research services to public and private enterprises.

The main focus of the study is to relate students' prior learning to the current NEPS course intents. You will find a copy of the student questionnaire enclosed, entitled "Nursing Education of Saskatchewan Program – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Study, Student Questionnaire".

We would like to provide all first-to-third year students currently enrolled in the NEPS and attending class on campus with the opportunity to participate in this study, and invite you to complete the questionnaire. Your responses are very important in determining whether or not there is a need and an interest from the student body to develop a PLAR process in association with the NEPS.

*Note: This questionnaire is in no way intended to serve as an actual assessment or evaluation of a particular student's prior learning with respect to their current standing or placement in the NEPS.*

*If you are currently registered in the Post Registration BSN program but are attending a NEPS course, we would ask that you do not participate in this survey.*

Your participation in this study is completely **voluntary**, and is not a required component of your academic courses. You will not be penalized in anyway should you decline to participate in the survey. Ethics approval for the survey has been obtained from the University of Saskatchewan Approval Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research on January 15, 2003, and from the College of Nursing Research Committee on December 21, 2002.

Any information you provide through participation in this study will be kept **confidential** by the consulting companies and will be used only to form part of the aggregate of all responses. The aggregate responses will be used to support the analysis and final report prepared by the consulting companies and presented to the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan.

**In order to maintain your anonymity, at no time should you put any identifying marks anywhere on the questionnaire.**

**Completing and returning the questionnaire constitutes consent to participate and permission for the consultants to use the data as described above.** *However, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to handing in the completed questionnaire.* The time to complete the questionnaire will vary for each participant depending on his or her own experiences, but on average will take approximately 30 minutes.

In consideration of the other commitments you may have, you may take the questionnaire home with you to complete. You will have until 4:30 p.m., Monday, January 27th, 2003 to return the completed questionnaire, sealed in the envelope provided, to the College of Nursing, Health Sciences Building Office A102, University of Saskatchewan*, and place it in the locked ballot box labeled "NEPS-PLAR Student Survey Responses". Please do not hand in any questionnaires after this date.

You may keep this letter for your record. If there are further questions regarding the study, you are invited to contact any of the project managers listed below or the Office of Research Services, University of Saskatchewan at 966-2084.

Thank you for your time and valuable support of this project.

Sincerely,

Professor Mary MacDonald
Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs
College of Nursing
University of Saskatchewan
(306) 966-6250

Ms. Candace Skrapek
Faculty/Clinical Placement
Coordinator, NEPS
Nursing Division
SIAST Kelsey Campus
(306) 933-7623

Ms. Norma Wildeman
Program Head, NEPS
Nursing Division
SIAST Wascana Campus
(306) 798-4301

* *SAMPLE LETTER: This letter was presented to NEPS students attending University of Saskatchewan. Drop-off locations for the surveys were changed in letters to NEPS students attending the SIAST Wascana and Kelsey campuses*

SURVEY NUMBER: Y_ - ___

# NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAM OF SASKATCHEWAN (NEPS) - PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR) STUDY
## STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Please answer the following questions that pertain to you to the best of your knowledge. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be reported in aggregate form. You are not required to answer all or any of the questions.**

## SECTION 1: General Information

**Q 1.1 Gender**

___ Female ___ Male

**Q 1.2 What year of the NEPS are you currently in?**

___ First Year
___ Second Year
___ Third Year

**Q 1.3 Year of Birth**

___ Prior to 1960
___ 1960 to 1964
___ 1965 to 1969
___ 1970 to 1974
___ 1975 to 1979
___ 1980 to 1985

**Q 1.4 Please indicate the highest level of formal education you attained prior to entering the NEPS:**

____ Grade 12/GED
____ Some College/Technical School, please specify ____________________
____ College/Technical School Graduate, please specify ____________________
____ Some University, please specify ____________________
____ University Graduate, please specify ____________________
____ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q 1.5 Where did you receive your education?**

___ Canada
___ United States
___ Outside North America

**Q 1.6 Do you have any employment experience in the health care system?**

____ None
____ Less than one year
____ 1-4 years
____ 5-9 years
____ 10-19 years
____ 20 or more years

**Q 1.7 If yes, in what health care occupation(s) were you employed?**

____ Registered Psychiatric Nurse
____ Licensed Practical Nurse
____ Home Care/Special Care Aide
____ Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
____ Laboratory Technician
____ Dietician/Nutritionist
____ Other, please specify ____________________

## SECTION 2: Relating Prior Learning to NEPS Course Intents

The primary objective of the following section is to relate students' prior learning to the current NEPS course intents. Your responses will assist NEPS in determining whether or not the student body perceives that they have a significant level of prior learning.

At the top of each page in Section II, you will find the number and title for a NEPS Course, followed by the intents of the course. The intents describe the theoretical and applied learning that NEPS students are expected to have acquired upon the successful completion of each course.

Below the course intents are a series of questions. The first two questions are qualifying questions, and your responses to these will determine whether you need to answer the remaining three questions on the page.

The first question asks you if you have received a transfer of credit for the course listed at the top of the page. If you have, then you should not respond to the remaining questions for that page, and you should proceed to the next page.

If you have not received a transfer of credit for the course listed, you will move on to the second question that will ask you whether you have any prior learning that relates to the course intents listed. If you do not have any prior learning, you should not respond to the remaining questions for that page, and you should proceed to the next page.

If you do have prior learning that meets either some, the majority of or all of the intents for the course listed, we ask that you complete the remaining three questions and then proceed to the next page/course.

**THIS QUESTION PATTERN IS REPEATED FOR EACH NEPS COURSE LISTED.**

## NURS 111.6 – Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body

***Learning Intents:***

Provided opportunity to internalize concepts of structure and function which will provide a basis for understanding:

- The human body;
- The impact of lifestyle on structure and function;
- Growth and development (lifespan - including pregnancy);
- Disease processes;
- Interdisciplinary therapeutic interventions (e.g., physio, medicine, chiropractic, pharmacy);
- Nursing practice.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______
___ Other, please specify ______

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 112.3 – Development of Self

**Learning Intents:**
Provide opportunity to:

- Explore and create a safe environment in which to develop an holistic awareness and understanding of self;
- Gain understanding and value of personal attributes and preferences;
- Experience personal growth and development;
- Appreciate and acknowledge the diversity of individuals and groups;
- Understand/appreciate caring for self and others.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 113.3 – Nursing: An Evolving Profession

**Learning Intents:**

- Provide opportunity to explore:
- Caring as the essence of theory based nursing practice;
- The formal organization of a self-regulating professional body;
- The historical, social, and organizational context in which nursing is practiced;
- The importance of knowledge development in collaborative approaches;
- The centrality of research to nursing practice.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 114.3 – Interpersonal Relationships

**Learning Intents:**
Provide opportunity to:

- Gain understanding of own interpersonal style and explore ways of communicating effectively across the life span;
- Develop and use interpersonal skills;
- Apply interpersonal skills for personal and professional therapeutic use of self;
- Extend concepts of self others through interpersonal communication;
- Apply concepts of caring during interaction with others;
- Explore diversity of interpersonal communications.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 115.3 – Core Concepts of Care

**Learning Intents:**

Provide opportunity to:

- Integrate concepts of caring in collaborating with individuals to meet health goals;
- Utilize therapeutic self in providing nursing care;
- Utilize critical thinking in providing nursing care;
- Develop competency in fundamental nursing skills;
- Develop skills related to ensuring a safe environment;
- Explore relationships with multi-disciplinary client-centered health team.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 116.3 – Introduction to Health Concepts

***Learning Intents:***

Provide opportunity to:

- Explore meaning of 'holistic' health for self and individuals, families, groups, communities and world;
- Develop an understanding of the concepts of Primary Health Care as a guide for practice;
- Gain an appreciation of the broad perspectives of community, its diversity, dynamics and interrelationship with health;
- Develop an awareness of diversity, change and social theory as a basis for understanding how individuals, families, groups, and communities increase control over and improve their health;
- Examine the social and political context currently shaping perceptions of health, health behavior and approaches to health.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes　　___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes　　___ No

## NURS 211.3 – Counseling in Nursing Practice

***Learning Intents:***

Provide opportunity to:

- Develop self as therapeutic in relation to others;
- Explore and practice a variety of counseling theories and models;
- Apply appropriate counseling strategies and techniques within a therapeutic relationship in a variety of settings;
- Facilitate the empowerment of clients through counseling relationships;
- Evaluate self within a therapeutic relationship.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet…**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning: for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 212.3 – Microbiology for Health Sciences

**Learning Intents:**

Explore the fundamentals of micro-organisms in relation to:

- The interaction with host;
- Impact on environment;
- Human disease;
- Nursing practice.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 213.6 – Therapeutics and Nursing Intervention

**Learning Intents:**

Provide opportunity to explore selected therapeutic interventions with a focus on:

- An understanding of theory;
- Safe practice;
- Moral/legal/ethical/professional considerations;
- Personal/cultural/religious preferences;
- Using critical thinking in assessing and decision-making.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 215.3 – Health Challenges of Adults I

***Learning Intents:***

Provide opportunity to:

- Explore health challenges of adults;
- Explore concepts of acuity and chronicity;
- Explore concepts of perioperative nursing;
- Explore concepts of rehabilitative nursing;
- Explore the relationships between developmental stages and health challenges;
- Explore concepts of holistic nursing care related to specific health challenges;
- Provide holistic nursing care to adults in a variety of settings;
- Collaborate within a multi-disciplinary client-centered health team.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 216.3 – Healthy Growth and Development

***Learning Intents:***

Provide opportunity to:

- Develop holistic understanding of normal growth and development from conception to death;
- Become familiar with a variety of theories of growth and development;
- In relation to growth and development, critically examine health challenges and health promotion.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 217.6 – Individual Assessment

**Learning Intents:**
Provide opportunity to:

- Understand the uniqueness and diversity of health assessment related to all lifestages;
- Apply relevant theories and tools to holistic health assessment of an individual;
- Practice and demonstrate health assessment utilizing therapeutic use of self, caring attitudes, communication and technical skills;
- Have opportunity to critique the processes of the assessment and the meaning of the data.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 218.3 – Education for Health

**Learning Intents:**
Provide opportunity to:

- Explore and create safe learning environments;
- Assist clients to explore health goals;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of individuals in teaching/learning situations;
- Develop and apply appropriate teaching/learning strategies to meet the health goals of clients;
- Reflect upon self as teacher and as a learner;
- Develop an awareness of educational ethics - values and beliefs which may influence teaching/learning.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify __________________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 219.3 – Health Challenges of Adults II

**Learning Intents:**

Provide opportunity to:

- Explore health challenges of adults;
- Explore the relationship between aging and selected health challenges;
- Explore concepts of palliative care;
- Explore concepts of holistic nursing care to adults within the context of families, groups and communities in a variety of settings;
- Collaborate within a multi-disciplinary client-centered health team.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 233.6 – Practicum I

***Learning Intents:***

Provide opportunity to collaborate within the multi-disciplinary team and gain experience in the following:

- Providing nursing care;
- Educating;
- Becoming a member of the profession;
- Accompanying;
- Using self therapeutically;
- Counselling;
- Advocating.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 300.3 – Health Challenges of Adults III: Theory

***Learning Intents:***
Provide opportunity to:

- Explore complex and rapidly changing health concepts of adults and their families;
- Explore concepts of holistic nursing care related to specific health challenges.

Assumptions: Students must have mastered the concepts presented in two preceding health challenges courses, as well as concepts presented in courses in Structure and Function, Pharmacology, Nutrition, Microbiology, and Social Interaction.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 301.3 – Health Challenges of Adults III: Clinical

**Learning Intents:**
Provided opportunity to:

- Provide holistic nursing care to adults and their families within the context of families, groups, and communities in a variety of settings;
- Collaborate within a multi-disciplinary patient-centered health team.

Assumptions: Students must have had some experience nursing in acute care settings and be familiar with medical and/or surgical ward routines; have had opportunity to review and make use of patients' histories in formulating a plan of care; made focused assessments of patients in acute care settings; use the "Five Rights to Medication Administration"; have beginning skills in establishing therapeutic relationships, carrying out the nursing process, and using aseptic technique; and have an understanding of the "Health Care Team" concept.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 302.3 – Health Challenges IV: Theory

**Learning Intents:**
Provide opportunity to:

- Explore the health challenges of infants, children, adolescents, and child-bearing women;
- Explore the relationship between developmental stages and health challenges;
- Explore the child-bearing experience;
- Collaborate within a multi-disciplinary client-centered health team.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes    ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ________________________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes    ___ No

## NURS 303.3 – Health Challenges IV: Clinical

**Learning Intents**:

Provide opportunity to apply learning in the following areas:

- Explore the health challenges of infants, children, adolescents, and child-bearing women;
- Explore the relationship between developmental stages and health challenges;
- Provide holistic nursing care to infants, children, adolescents, and child-bearing women within the context of families, groups, and communities in a variety of settings;
- Explore the child-bearing experience;
- Collaborate within a multi-disciplinary client-centered health team.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 317.3 – Family Diversity

**Learning Intents:**
Provide opportunity to:

- Explore diversity of families within the context of community and society;
- Become familiar with a variety of theories related to family;
- Explore family health challenges including: reducing inequities, increasing prevention, enhancing coping and health promotion such as self care, mutual aid, healthy environments;
- Within the context of caring:
  - Apply relevant theories and processes for assessments of holistic health assessment of a family;
  - Implement and evaluate strategies for beginning interventions.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 319.3 – Issues in Nursing

**Learning Intents:**

Provide opportunity to use critical social theory to:

- Explore legal, ethical, moral, and political issues related to practice of nursing;
- Participate in a political action process and reflect upon the personal meaning of the experience.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes  ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ **Formal post-secondary institution**
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes  ___ No

## NURS 325.3 – Practice in Communities

**Learning Intents:**

Provide opportunity to:

- Understand the uniqueness and diversity of communities;
- Be introduced to the concept of the community as a whole;
- Identify and utilize community resources using Primary Health Care Concepts;
- Have opportunity to practice in a community setting;
- Apply concepts of epidemiology in community;
- Apply relevant theories and tools for assessment of community.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ______________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ______________________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ______________________________
___ Other, please specify ______________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 327.3 – Participating With Groups

**Learning Intents:**
Provide opportunity to:

- Recognize intra/inter/extra personal influences that affect group behavior;
- Integrate and utilize group skills and dynamics within group settings;
- Participate in multisectoral collaboration within communities;
- Facilitate groups to achieve the identified goals of the group;
- Value the effectiveness of group self-determination.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet…**
___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 418.3 – Management in Health Systems

**Learning Intents:**

Provide opportunity to explore:

- The diversity of approach within the collegial role;
- The competencies required in coordinating and managing quality care in nursing practice.
- Innovative and diverse roles within a changing environment;
- The relationship of management theories to systems for health.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ________________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ________________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ________________________
___ Other, please specify ________________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 419.3 – Research for Professional Practice

**Learning Intents:**
Provide opportunity to:

- Become an informed consumer of research;
- Understand the process of systemic investigation to questions in health contexts;
- Examine criteria for application of research findings in practice settings.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet...**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## NURS 420.3 – Partnerships With Community

**Learning Intents:**

Provide opportunity to:

- Utilize the concept of community as a whole;
- Analyze and evaluate community resources;
- Establish a foundation for development of community resources;
- Be involved in social participation/community development;
- Address challenges through a variety of approaches: Primary Health Care, use of epidemiology and critical theories;
- Explore ethical issues related to community interaction.

**Q1. Have you received a transfer of credit for this course?**

___ Yes ___ No

***If you answered yes to Q1, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered no to Q1, please proceed to Q2.***

**Q2. At the time you entered the NEPS, did you feel you had prior learning that would meet…**

___ None of the above course intents?
___ Some of the above course intents?
___ The majority of the above course intents?
___ All of the above course intents?

***If you answered none of the above for Q2, please proceed to the next page.***
***If you answered that you had any level of prior learning for Q2, please proceed to Q3.***

**Q3. Where did you acquire this learning?**

___ Formal post-secondary institution
___ Work Experience
___ Volunteer Activities, please specify ____________________
___ In-service/Workshops/Non-credit courses, please specify ____________________
___ Self-instruction, please specify ____________________
___ Other, please specify ____________________

**Q4. When did you acquire this learning?**

___ Less than five years ago
___ Five or more years ago

**Q5. Could you provide any evidence/documentation to support that you have acquired this learning; for example: certificates, letters of reference, skills demonstration, or challenge exams, among others?**

___ Yes ___ No

## SECTION 3: Opinion Regarding Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

The main objective of the following section is to determine the level of interest that NEPS students may have in utilizing PLAR Services if they were offered by the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan.

A PLAR assessment may be accomplished by a variety of methods, such as developing a portfolio that documents evidence of your prior learning, writing a challenge exam, a demonstration of your skills, or a combination of these or other options. In addition to the time that must be dedicated to the assessment process, typically PLAR incurs a cost to the student.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT PLAR AND INDICATE THE RESPONSE THAT MOST ACCURATELY REFLECTS YOUR OPINION.

Q 3.1 **Based on my current knowledge of PLAR, I feel that undergoing a PLAR process would be a worthwhile exercise to undertake, regardless if there is a risk that I may not be awarded credit for the course I am challenging.**

**___ AGREE**
**___ DISAGREE**
**___ NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE**

Q 3.2 **I would be interested in utilizing a PLAR process, if there was one offered by the NEPS.**

___ Yes ___ No

*This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for your valuable input.*

# APPENDIX THREE:

## STUDENT FOCUS GROUP COVER LETTER

## MODERATOR'S GUIDE FOR STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

## PLAR OVERVIEW FOR STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

January 20, 2003

Dear NEPS Student:

**Re: Focus Group Sessions to Support the NEPS-Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Study**

As a follow-on activity to the student survey, the Calibre Group of Companies may conduct one or more focus group sessions to further explore select issues regarding student's prior learning and the potential of utilizing a PLAR process in the NEPS.

The dates for holding the focus groups will be decided in consultation with the project managers and faculty, taking into consideration the various commitments of students before, during, and after the February mid-term break. Each focus group will consist of approximately ten participants.

The focus group sessions will be held in Saskatoon and/or Regina. Those focus group sessions held in Saskatoon will take place at Pulse Research Limited's in-house focus group research centre, and Pulse will arrange for suitable accommodation for any session(s) held in Regina. Students will only be invited to participate in focus groups that are held in the same city as the campus they are currently attending.

Each focus group will last approximately two hours and will be undertaken in the following manner:

- The moderator, a representative from Pulse Research Limited, will provide an introduction and overview of the nature of the focus group session.
- The moderator will present the issues to be discussed and guide the discussion according to questions and commentary provided in the moderator's guide.
- The moderator will ensure that all participants have an equal opportunity to participate.
- The moderator will probe for additional information, as required, to ensure that all topics and all questions are fully addressed by the participants.

As part of regular procedures, all focus groups will be audio-taped and transcribed by the consultants to assist them in documenting and analyzing the session. Any information you provide through participation in this study will be kept confidential by the consulting companies, and will form part of the aggregate of all responses used to support the analysis and final report prepared by the consulting companies and presented to the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan.

Where it is appropriate, direct quotes from a participant may be used in the dissemination of results (e.g., final report). In these instances, the researchers will keep the identity of the respondent quoted confidential. At no time will the consultants or researchers use direct quotations that have been phrased in a way that might reveal the identity of a particular individual.

If you are interested in providing your valuable input at a focus group session, please contact Melanie Skinner with Calibre Strategic Services/Pulse Research Limited to place your name on a list of potential participants. Ms. Skinner may be reached by phone at Calibre's toll free number 1-877-880-0688, and in Saskatoon at (306) 931-9641, or by e-mail at mskinner@calibrestrategic.com. We ask those interested in participating to contact Ms. Skinner by 4:30 p.m., Monday, January 27th, 2003.

In order to assist the consultants in assigning you to the appropriate focus group session, Ms. Skinner will ask you to provide the following information, which will be keep in confidence by the consultants:

a) Name;
b) Phone number;
c) Current year in the NEPS;
d) Location of the campus you attend (Saskatoon or Regina);
e) Highest level of formal education you attained prior to entering the NEPS;
f) Where you received your education;
g) Whether you have employment experience in the health care system; and
h) If so, what occupation(s) you were/are employed and the length of your employment.

If it is determined that focus groups need to be conducted following the completion of the student survey, the consultants will select ten to twelve students from the participant list, taking care to ensure that recruited participants represent a reasonable cross-section of the students. It is possible that not everyone who signs up for the focus groups will be invited to participate due to the limited size of the focus group sessions (10-12 participants). Note: You will not be required to complete the survey portion of this study in order to participate in the focus group session.

If you have been selected to participate in the survey, a representative from Pulse Research Limited will contact you to invite you to attend a specific focus group session. Prior to commencing the focus group session, you will be required to sign the consent and confidentiality agreement on page three of this document that states you are participating on a voluntary basis, you agree to keep the discussions held during the focus group confidential, and you permit the consultants/researchers to use the data as described above. Please be aware that there is a risk the information shared in the focus group may be disclosed by a participant to people outside the focus group even though a Confidentiality Agreement has been signed.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and is not a required component of your academic courses. If you do participate in a focus group, you will not be required to state your opinion(s) on all of the discussion topics unless you are willing to do so. You are also free to withdraw from participating in the focus group at any time. You will not be penalized in anyway should you decline to participate in the focus groups.

Ethics approval for the focus group has been obtained from the University of Saskatchewan Approval Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research on January 15, 2003 and from the College of Nursing Research Committee on December 21, 2002.

You may keep this letter for your record. If you choose to participate in a focus group session, a copy of the consent and confidentiality agreement attached will be given to you once you have signed it. If there are further questions regarding the study, you are invited to contact any of the project managers listed below or the Office of Research Services, University of Saskatchewan at 966-2084. Thank you for your time and valuable support of this project.

Sincerely,

Professor Mary MacDonald
Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs
College of Nursing
University of Saskatchewan
(306) 966-6250

Ms. Candace Skrapek
Faculty/Clinical Placement
Coordinator, NEPS
Nursing Division
SIAST Kelsey Campus
(306) 933-7623

Ms. Norma Wildeman
Program Head, NEPS
Nursing Division
SIAST Wascana Campus
(306) 798-4301

## Consent and Confidentiality Agreement

I, ____________________________________ (*Please print full name*), have read and understood the attached cover letter disclosing the purpose, procedures, and potential risks of the focus group session for the NEPS-PLAR study. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily.

By my signature below, I voluntarily consent to participate in the focus group session as described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time, without penalty.

I also agree to keep all discussions held amongst participants during the focus group session in strict confidence, and will not disclose the nature of these discussions to people outside the focus group session.

I understand that, although the consultants and researchers will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of all responses, there is a risk the information shared in the focus group may be disclosed by another focus group participant to people outside the focus group, even though a Confidentiality Agreement has been signed.

A copy of this consent form will be given to me for my records.

____________________________________
*(Signature of participant)*

__________________________
*(Date – mm/dd/yy)*

## NEPS-PLAR FOCUS GROUP
## MODERATOR'S SCRIPT
## MARCH, 2003

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**5:00 PM**

Good afternoon. Thank you for volunteering your time this afternoon to discuss some issues that are very important to the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan.

Our names are Art Battiste and Melanie Skinner. We work with Pulse Research Limited, a Saskatoon based research firm that has been contracted to carry out research into Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (or PLAR) on behalf of the NEPS. We will be sharing the moderator's chair this afternoon.

You have been asked to participate in this evening's focus group session as a follow-on activity to a student survey that was conducted by the NEPS in January, regarding Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

Most of us have had experience with quantitative research – market research surveys and opinion polls (usually at supper time, right, or when we're in the bath). These types of research tools are used to help researchers to identify what people think, what their opinions and perceptions are.

Focus groups are a type of qualitative research that is employed to gain a better understanding of people's feelings and opinions. In a focus group the whole point of the research is not **only** to identify people's opinions and feelings, but also to search for the underlying reasons for these opinions and feelings, to find out **why** you said "yes" or "no", **why** you chose one thing or another from a list, **why** you did not choose the others, **why** you assigned a particular rating to an issue or statement.

So, tonight, we're going to further discuss some issues regarding PLAR and the potential of utilizing PLAR in the NEPS program. Before we start, there are a few rules about the conduct of focus groups…

First, what we say in this room tonight is confidential. Opinions and feelings are very personal, and we're going to keep them that way. That's why we will use only first names during our discussion.

I will be making an audiotape of our discussions, so that I can review what was said, summarize the discussion, and prepare a report for my client – the NEPS. Audiotapes are impersonal, and do not reveal who said what, but only what was said. At no time will your identities be revealed.

Second, it is important that each of you comments on each question, each topic, that we discuss. My job here is only to introduce the topics, to ask the questions, to make certain that each of you has the chance to comment, and to keep things moving along, so that we finish on time – about 7:15 pm.

Third, there are no right answers or opinions, no wrong answers or opinions. Everyone's point of view is equally important.

Fourth, I expect that not everyone will agree on everything – that's human nature. So, if someone says something that you disagree with, don't be shy – but be polite – let them finish what they're saying, then tell us what your different opinion is, and be prepared to say why.

Fifth, we are going to take a break in about one hour to stretch, use the washroom and grab some food and beverages. We will then continue with the session. Also, if you need to use the bathrooms at any time, just get up and go.

This evening's experience will consist of two types of activities. The first will be a series of written exercises, which will ask you to state your opinions regarding a specific issue or to apply your own relevant experiences. We will then discuss everyone's feedback after each of these written exercises.

Are there any questions?

Before we proceed I will get each of you to sign a consent and confidentiality form that states that:

1) You have understood the explanation provided regarding this evenings activities and have had the opportunity to ask any questions you may have;
2) You are participating on a voluntary basis; and
3) You agree to keep all discussions held during this focus group session confidential.

If there is anyone at this point who no longer wishes to participate in the focus group session, I ask that you leave at this time, and we thank you for your time.

**5:10 PM**

Before we begin this evening's discussion, Melanie Skinner is going to provide you with an overview of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) so that we all have the same understanding of this process.

**5:20 PM**

Now, to start the discussion, let's make some introductions. Starting on my left, please say your **first name only**, tell us what year of the NEPS program you are currently taking, and say a couple of words about what related experience or training you had before you enrolled in NEPS, and anything else you would like to add about yourself.

I am now going to handout a pen and several sheets that we will use throughout the evening to complete the written exercise portions of our session. Please use only the pen that I provide to do the exercises.

**DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE RESPONS SHEETS!** I am interested only in the answers, and I do not want to know whose answers are whose.

**5:30 PM**

**(START AUDIOTAPE HERE)**

**WRITTEN EXERCISE #1 (23 minutes TOTAL)**

Each of you has some type of informal prior learning that you have gained through work, volunteer, or life experiences. Your experience, and any associated training or additional education, may have prepared you for some of the specific courses that form part of the NEPS program of studies leading to the BSc (Nursing) and the RN designation.

As you did when you completed the student survey, I'd like you to take a moment now to reflect on these experiences. On the first sheet in the package provided (Page 1), please specify those duties, activities, or other learning and why you feel this learning could or could not meet any of the learning intents in the NEPS program.

Keep in mind that the NEPS has to ensure an appropriate level & quality of learning to meet the demands of the RN licensing body in Saskatchewan, SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association) and health-care employers.

You may use a copy of the student survey to refer to the courses and their learning intents if necessary.

You will have about 8 minutes.

**(TURN OFF AUDIOTAPE HERE)**

**(START AUDIOTAPE HERE)**

Now, let's discuss what we have written (15 minutes).

(PICK ONE NAME, AND START WITH THAT PERSON, THEN RANDOMLY ASK OTHERS)

**5:55 PM**

**BREAK**

We will recommence in approximately 15 minutes, please help your self to some soup and sandwiches.

**6:15 PM**

**WRITTEN EXERCISE #2 (30 minutes)**

In this exercise, I want you to think of your own prior learning experiences related to health care that you may have gained through work, volunteer experience, other types of previous training or in-services up to the present day. Now take these experiences, and pretend you have just been accepted into the NEPS program. Depending on your previous formal education, you may have four years or more of learning, training, and practical experience ahead of you before can work full-time as a Registered Nurse. You realize that you have a lot of informal learning that may help you in understanding your course material, but this learning will not be recognized for credit.

Recently, you have heard that some other Nursing Programs have implemented a process called PLAR, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, that enables students to challenge a course for credit based on their prior learning. You are excited, and you are explaining PLAR to a friend.

On pages 2-5, in point form or a few short sentences, write what you will say to your friend about the following topics (there is a short explanatory phrase at the top of each page):

1) In the first bubble, tell your friend what benefits you feel PLAR could provide to you (a minimum of three reasons)

2) In the second bubble, tell your friend what you feel the best method would be for you to demonstrate your learning to a PLAR assessors and why (i.e. Portfolio, Challenge Exam, Skills Demonstration, Interviews, etc.). Your friend reminds you that you will have to have an appropriate level & quality of learning in order to receive a license and be employed as a Registered Nurse.

3) In the third bubble, tell your friend how much time (i.e. hours or days) you would be willing to dedicate in order to gather and demonstrate evidence of your prior learning (keep in mind your expected class workload and other existing commitments).

4) As you discuss this innovative alternative, you begin to wonder how much this type of assessment and credit granting would cost the student. In the fourth bubble, tell your friend what you think would be an appropriate fee range for the Nursing Program to charge for these assessment services.

You will have about 10 minutes (until 6:25 pm).

**(TURN OFF AUDIOTAPE HERE)**

**(START AUDIOTAPE HERE)**

Now, let's discuss what we have written (15 minutes until 6:40).

(PICK ONE NAME, AND START WITH THAT PERSON, THEN RANDOMLY ASK OTHERS)

**6:40 PM**

**EXERCISE #3 (10 minutes in total)**

Let's now pretend that the NEPS would like to develop a PLAR process for use by the students. The faculty in charge of coordinating this project knows that the process of implementing PLAR will be costly and time consuming, and consequently the NEPS will only be able to initially offer a few programs for PLAR. This faculty member would like your assistance in determining which courses should be readied for PLAR first. You will find a shortlist of proposed courses on page 6 of the response sheets.

Based on your own prior learning and related experiences, do you agree that the courses listed should be the first courses to be made PLAR-ready? Why or why not.

Are there any other courses you feel should be added to the list? And Why?

You will have about 3 minutes.

**(TURN OFF AUDIOTAPE HERE)**

**(START AUDIOTAPE HERE)**

Now, let's discuss what we have written (7 minutes until 6:50).

(PICK ONE NAME, AND START WITH THAT PERSON, THEN RANDOMLY ASK OTHERS)

**6:50 PM**

EXERCISE #4 (10 minutes in total)

Now I'd like us to discuss whether there are any issues or barriers you can forsee to implementing and utilizing PLAR in the NEPS program (i.e. lack of awareness, lack of time/workload pressures, lack of resources, etc.)?

Please take a couple minutes and jot down any issues you see arising on page 7.

**(TURN OFF AUDIOTAPE HERE)**

**(START AUDIOTAPE HERE)**

Now, let's discuss what we have written.

**7:05 PM**

## WRAP-UP

That wraps it up for this evening. Thank you very much for helping the NEPS program. In appreciation for your participation and to offset any expenses you incurred in attending this evening's session, we have a small honorarium of $20 for each of you. We ask that you sign your name to this sheet stating that you have received your honorarium.

Good night.

## Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

### Definition

In post-secondary education, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a systematic process of assessing, recognizing, and awarding credit for learning (knowledge, skills, values, etc.) that meets the learning outcomes of an accredited course or program, but which has been gained outside of formal education through a variety of means, such as work, non-credit courses, industry training, volunteer activities, life experiences, and so on.

### Possible Activities in a PLAR Process

1. Consult with PLAR Designated Contact
    a. Discuss PLAR process, application, and fees
    b. Complete a self audit & review with advisor
    c. Match learning outcomes to assessment criteria
2. Apply for PLAR
3. Develop Action Plan with PLAR Advisory
4. Prepare for Prior Learning Assessment
    a. Collect, create, compile evidence
    b. Take portfolio training if needed
5. Complete assessment
    a. Challenge exam
    b. Submit Portfolio
    c. Work based evaluation (skill demonstration, simulation, etc.)
    d. Interview, oral examination
    e. Top-up assignments
    f. Others
6. Advisor/Assessor evaluates challenge
7. If challenge is successful, student is awarded partial or full credit for course

### Assessor Requirements

Validity: How relevant is your evidence to the learning outcome?

Authenticity: Is the work actually yours. Were you part of a team?

Currency: How recent is your evidence?

Sufficiency: Does your evidence demonstrate you adequately meet the learning outcomes being challenged? Quality of evidence is more important than quantity.

### PLAR Fees

- Application fee charges (approximately $35)
- Pay 50% of course tuition fees. Fee is non-refundable. OR
- Same as regular course tuition fees. Fees based on credits requested not awarded.